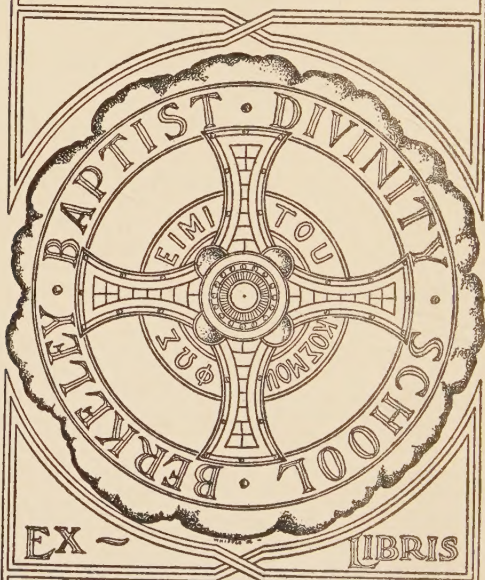


ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISCIPLES

BY A. W. FORTUNE, PH.D.

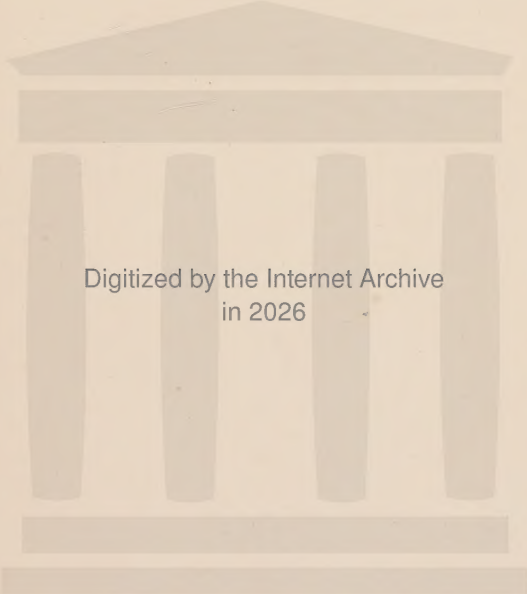
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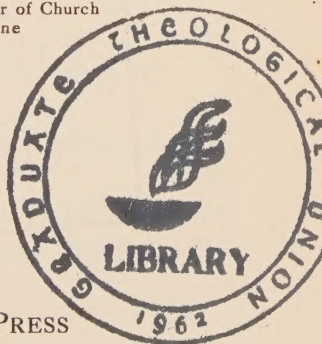


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Origin and Development of the Disciples

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DEDICATED

to the members of Central Christian Church, Lexington, Kentucky; a church whose history covers the entire period of the separate existence of the Disciples; the church that consummated the union with the Stone movement; the church that entertained the Campbell and Rice Debate; a church that has had in its membership many of the Disciple leaders.

Introduction

The people who are designated as the Disciples of Christ constitute a communion of more than a million members. This body, which has its greatest strength in the Middle West, is found in nearly all parts of the United States. There are churches in Canada, England and Australia, and a vigorous missionary program is being carried out in many foreign countries. The Disciples have various agencies for the promotion of missions, benevolences and education. Although they have not accepted a formulated creed, there are elements of faith which are generally believed, that distinguish them from other communions.

The fact that the Disciples have prevented their faith from becoming formulated in a written creed has made it easy for them to develop in their interpretation of religion. The fact that they have had no written constitution, outlining the polity of the church, has made the development in organization inevitable. Because they have no written creed and constitution there are widely divergent elements in the church, and all feel that they are true Disciples. The purpose of this little book is to state the origin of the Disciple movement and trace its development down to the present.

Christians should be familiar with the general course of the history of the church, and especially of their own communion; yet laymen are lamentably ignorant of this important subject. It is rather strange that there should be so much emphasis on the first century of the church and that there should be such neglect of the next eighteen centuries. This little book is prepared especially for the laymen with the hope that it may interest some in a further study of the contribution which the Disciples have made to Christianity.

The one who studies the history of any communion, and especially of his own, should endeavor to have the true historical spirit. The historical spirit is not polemical. One does not study history to find something with which he can find fault. If there are objectionable things, the historian should not seek to cover them, but these should not be unduly magnified. The historical spirit is not apologetical. One does not read history merely to find the things which he approves. If there are conditions which are in harmony with the historian's belief, he is entitled to state them, but he has turned from a historian to an apologist when he magnifies these conditions out of their true proportion. The one who has the historical spirit seeks to know the facts regardless of the bearing of these on his own beliefs. Although the writer is a Disciple and has

the sympathetic approach, his purpose is to state the facts as he understands them.

The study of history has more than an intellectual interest. We do not study it merely that we may know the important movements of the past. We should be anxious to understand history because of its bearing on our relation to life's tasks. We cannot understand the present unless we know something about the forces which have helped to make it what it is. If we would help to direct the future we must know the struggles through which we have come to where we are.

Chapter I

The Church Becomes Divided

A great movement does not come into being over night. It is not created by the force of some great personality. A movement that lives is born out of a real need, and the leaders merely give expression to the thoughts and feelings of their age. Thomas Campbell did not create the movement which developed into the Christian communion; he was the voice through which a great need found expression.

1. The church before the Reformation—

One cannot understand the movement of which the Campbells were leaders unless he has a general knowledge of the changes in the church of the seventeen centuries preceding their day. Their protest was against the corruptions which had crept into the church and had marred its usefulness. Their aim was to lead the church back into the simplicity of the apostolic age. The pioneer Disciples were great students of church history. They studied the past in order that they might know how the church had come to where it was in their day and to help them to determine how they should try to lead it in the future. The one who would understand what

these men were trying to do must follow them back through the past.

a) The church united.—Theoretically the church was united for a thousand years. Jesus had prayed that his followers might be one. He was anxious that they might be united in spirit and purpose, that they might be able to convince the world. There was one church during the apostolic period. There was no ecclesiastical organization binding all these churches into a unit. There was no formulated statement of belief to which the members of these churches subscribed. There was actually much variation in belief, for they differed as widely as did the Jews and the Gentiles. It is doubtful whether there was a uniform organization to which all the churches conformed. There was not always perfect harmony, and sometimes the controversy became very bitter. But there was only one church during the first century, and the leaders protested against anything which looked like division. Paul was unwilling to admit that there was a Jewish church and a Gentile church; he insisted that the middle wall of partition had been broken down and that they were all one. Paul bitterly condemned little divisions in the church. He insisted that men were carnal when they helped to perpetuate divisions.

The simple, apostolic church of the first century very early developed into the Catholic Church which became institutionalized in organization and doc-

trine. There were many who dissented from the commonly accepted position, like the Gnostics and the Manichaeans, but they were not regarded as being in the church; they were treated as heretics. Irenaeus, who wrote against the Gnostic heresy in the latter part of the second century, insisted that the church is one and that the members are bound together by a common faith. In *Against Heresies* (I.X.I.) he says: "The church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples this faith: She believes in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets the dispensations of God; and the advents; and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his future manifestations from heaven in the glory of the Father to gather all things in one, and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, etc." Irenaeus asserted that the church not only received this faith from the past, but that it was everywhere believed. He said: "The church, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout

the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points of doctrine just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them, and hands them down with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth." The thought that the church was divided and that the Gnostics constituted one branch was foreign to the thinking of Irenaeus. He believed in one church which had a common faith, hence the Gnostics and all others who did not accept this faith were regarded as heretics.

Cyprian, the bishop of North Africa, wrote extensively, about the middle of the third century, on the unity of the church. He believed the church was united in its organization under the bishops. In chapter five in his treatise on *The Unity of the Church* he said: "And this unity we ought freely to hold and assert, especially those of us who are bishops who preside in the church, that we may prove the episcopate itself to be one and undivided. . . . The church also is one, which is spread abroad far and wide into a multitude by an increase of fruitfulness. . . . Thus also the church, shone over with the light of the Lord, sheds forth her rays over the whole world, yet it is one light which is everywhere diffused, nor is the unity of the body separated." There could be only one church, according to Cyprian, for it was the depository of the

Christian teaching which had been handed down from the apostles, the bishops being the custodians. That being true, it was necessary for one to be a part of this church if he desired to be saved. This conception is emphasized in chapter six of *The Unity of the Church*: "Nor can he who forsakes the church of Christ attain to the reward of Christ. He is a stranger, he is profane; he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for his Father who has not the church for his mother. If any one could escape who was outside the ark of Noah, then he also may escape who shall be outside of the church."

When the Catholic Church became centralized in the papacy, the insistence on unity became even more pronounced. The pope, as the representative of Christ, was regarded as the head of the universal church, and, in the West, all who were not united with him were considered schismatics. That theory was not universally accepted, for the church in the East did not acknowledge the supremacy of the bishop of Rome.

b) *Eastern and Western churches divide.*—From an early day a division was developing between the eastern and western parts of the Empire which would inevitably lead to a division, not only in the Empire, but in the church as well. A cleavage in the church is noticeable before the final division in the Empire which came near the close of the fourth

century. The Eastern Church became more and more orientalized as the centuries passed, and the Latin races of the West were changed by the barbarian invaders. The Eastern Church continued to use the Greek language in the service, and the Western Church adopted the Latin.

Inasmuch as the patriarch of Constantinople was the servant of the emperor, the Eastern Church became a department of the state. But while the patriarch of Constantinople was becoming a mere satellite of the emperor, the bishop of Rome was becoming the most powerful figure in the West. When the emperor was unable to protect Rome from the invasion of the Lombards, the Pope appealed to the Frankish leader for help. On Christmas day, 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great as Emperor of the Romans. This was a very definite step in the direction of final separation, as it linked up the Western Church with the Frankish Empire as the Eastern Church was linked up with the Eastern Empire.

As time passed theological differences developed. The East and the West did not agree on the images and pictures in the churches, as is indicated by the Iconoclastic Controversy. They differed on the interpretation of the relation of the Son to the Father, as the Filioque Controversy indicates. A crisis was reached about the middle of the ninth century. In

857, Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople, refused to administer the sacrament to Caesar Bardas on account of his immoral living. As a result Ignatius was deposed and Photius was elected to his place. The friends of Ignatius appealed to the Pope who called a synod at Rome and placed Photius under the ban of excommunication. The Emperor replied to this action by convening a council in Constantinople and deposing the Pope.

These acts of excommunication concerned only individuals, the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop of Rome. The final schism did not come until about two centuries later. About the middle of the eleventh century Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, addressed an encyclical letter to the Bishop of Apulia in the interest of closer union with the Western Church. In this letter he mentioned the errors of the Western Church which stood in the way of the closest union. To the list of errors which was usually given he added the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist. This letter fell into the hands of Pope Leo IX who made an indignant reply. Papal legates went to Constantinople and placed this reply on the altar of St. Sophia, and along with it a sentence of anathema against Patriarch Michael Cerularius and all his supporters. This document cited eleven evil doctrines and practices of the Patriarch and the Eastern Church. It

also invoked on them a solemn curse in which they were classed with the worst heretics and with the devil himself. This document was placed on the altar of St. Sophia in 1054 and the Eastern and Western churches were permanently separated.

It is doubtful whether the theory of the unity of the church had been abandoned, or even modified, by either party. Each regarded itself as the only true church and considered the other as a schismatic. Each was waiting for the other to acknowledge its waywardness and return to the fold from which it had departed. It was evident, though, that there were two branches of the church, one looking to Rome for leadership, while the other looked to Constantinople.

c) Dissenting parties in the West.—While the church in the West was theoretically united in the Roman hierarchy, yet in reality there were divisions. Some of these sects, like the Waldenses, had many followers and maintained a separate existence for a long time. Although some of these bodies were more Christian than was the Roman Church, they were not regarded as in any way belonging to the church. It made no difference how closely they might conform to the New Testament in faith, or how pure they might be in life, if they were not in harmony with the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, they were heretical. All the ma-

chinery of the church was used to force these heretics to conform. One of the darkest pages in the history of the church is the one which records the persecutions of the inquisition which was conducted against those who had departed from the teachings and practices of the church. Many of the noblest characters of the age were tortured and put to death in the most cruel manner.

Previous to the German Reformation the church in the western part of Europe was in a measure united. It was a union, however, which was forced by the rack and the fire, and division is infinitely more to be desired than such a union.

2. The Reformation and division—

a) The right of the individual asserted.—The semblance of union in Western Europe was broken by the German Reformation. John Huss, Savonarola, and others had claimed the right to think for themselves in matters of religion, but this right had been denied, and some of them had paid for their presumption with their death. Martin Luther not only asserted his right to think on the subject of religion, but he also claimed the privilege of following where his thinking led him. This privilege was mildly asserted in the ninety-five theses in which he questioned the position of the church on indulgences. The right of the individual was more definitely maintained in his small treatise on *Christian*

Liberty. In this work, as well as in others, he maintained that the Christian is a priest and can come directly to God.

The Catholic Church denied to Luther the liberty which he claimed. A bull of excommunication was issued against him, but this bull was burned by Luther in the presence of the students and citizens of Wittenberg. Luther was summoned before the Diet of Worms and was commanded to recant the position which he had taken in his writings. He answered the summons, but he boldly asserted his rights as a Christian, declaring that he could not recant the position he had taken unless he was convinced by Scripture or evident reason that he was wrong. Luther closed his statement by making his appeal to heaven. He was placed under the ban of the Empire, and was a man without rights. But in his retreat in the Wartburg he continued to think, and from his retreat he sent forth writings to help others to find their way out of bondage. Later he defied the power of the church and went forth to lead in the great struggle for the freedom of the individual conscience.

b) Liberty granted with limitations.—At times the hopes of the Protestant leaders were at a low ebb, for ultimate defeat seemed inevitable. The political situation in Europe, however, was so linked up with the religious struggle that the Emperor was ultimately forced to recognize the rights of the Prot-

estants. From the point of view of the Catholics this did not effect the unity of the church, for the Protestants were regarded as schismatics and heretics. But the rights of the Protestants were guaranteed in Germany and they became a branch of the church. The Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555) gave legal sanction to the Reformation in the Holy Roman Empire, and the Pope could no longer hurl bulls and anathemas against Protestants because of their faith.

The Religious Peace of Augsburg was limited in the rights which it guaranteed. It protected only those who accepted the Augsburg Confession. The thousands of Protestants in South Germany who were unwilling to sign the Augsburg Confession could not claim any legal rights. The Anabaptists were condemned and were treated as outlaws.

c) Uniformity sought by reformers.—While the Protestant leaders contended for the right of the individual to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, they were unwilling to grant that right to others. In almost every case they sought to enforce uniformity. Luther would not co-operate with Zwingli because of their differences on the subject of the Lord's Supper, although co-operation seemed necessary for the success of Protestantism. The faith of the Lutherans was formulated in the Augsburg Confession. This Confession condemned the Anabaptists because of their position on baptism.

and expressed disapproval of those who gave a different interpretation of the Lord's Supper.

When the reformation was inaugurated in England, uniformity was sought by law. Not only was the Roman Catholic religion forbidden, but all were required to worship according to the regulation of the Prayer Book. Queen Mary, in her attempt to restore the Catholic faith, had so many executed that she became known as "Bloody Mary," but we should not forget that the Protestant rulers, in their attempt to enforce uniformity, put to death some of the leading men of England.

d) Divisions inevitable.—It was perfectly natural for those who had been under the domination of Rome to seek uniformity in their own circles. They wanted the right to think, but they were afraid to grant that right to others for fear it would be abused. The leaders in each section felt confident that they had reached the correct interpretation of religion, hence these interpretations were formulated in creeds to guide their followers in their faith and to protect the true faith against heresy.

When the mind was freed from the domination of the Roman hierarchy, it was natural for men to do some thinking for themselves on the subject of religion. It was impossible that any leader, or group of leaders, who had so recently begun to do their own thinking, should comprehend all the truth that

there is in religion. Along with the truth, as they had worked it out, there was apt to be some error, or at least what appeared to others to be error. When an attempt was made to force a fixed formulation of faith, dissent was inevitable. The attempt at uniformity and the dissent which inevitably followed led to the multiplying of denominations.

Most of the European countries had their established churches, but as the years passed there were numerous dissenting bodies. In England the Anglican Church was the established church, but the fight made by the Puritans had borne fruit and religious liberty had been granted. Among these dissenting bodies the Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists were the most important. The Presbyterians were the prevailing body in Scotland, although some of the other communions had made some headway. Ireland was largely Catholic, but the Protestant churches of Scotland were established in certain parts.

Jesus had prayed that his followers might be one, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century they were divided into numerous parties. Christ had sought to impress on his disciples the kingdom as the goal for which they were to work. Because of denominationalism many Christians had lost sight of the goal set by the Master and were emphasizing their points of difference.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Discuss the character of the unity of the church during the first thousand years.

2. Discuss the divisions in the church prior to the German Reformation.

3. What was the cause of the German Reformation?

4. Why did the Reformers seek uniformity?

5. Why did the Reformation lead to divisions?

Questions for Discussion

1. Why should the Disciples be interested in Church History?

2. Which is more desirable, union, or freedom of conscience?

3. On what condition could there be uniformity?

4. Is uniformity desirable?

5. How could there be union without uniformity?

Chapter II

Thomas Campbell's Desire for Union

Sectarianism has a tendency to produce an un-Christian spirit. When sectarianism is strong, the community is divided and churches work against each other. The sectarian spirit makes one more anxious to build up his party than to save sinners or establish the Kingdom of God. Thomas Campbell early revolted against sectarianism, and the desire for union became the passion that guided his life.

1. His denominational environment—

Thomas Campbell, who was of Scotch descent, was born in Ireland in 1763. His father, who had been a Roman Catholic, renounced Catholicism for the Anglican Church, and he was anxious that his sons should "serve God according to act of Parliament." The formal, ritualistic service of the Anglican Church did not satisfy Thomas when he grew to young manhood, and he began to attend the services of the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church in Scotland and Ireland was at this time very much divided. In 1712 the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which was the state church, sought to deprive congregations of the right to select

their own ministers. This was a fundamental privilege of Presbyterianism and this resulted in a division, the dissenters becoming known as the Seceders.

The Secession Church divided in 1747 over the oath which bound them to support "the religion presently professed within the realm." Some of the Seceders held that one could not swear "to profess and allow with his heart the true religion presently professed within the realm and authorized by the laws thereof," without consenting to support the church from which they had withdrawn, and which they now designated as "a household of Satan." Those who supported the oath were called Burghers; those who opposed it were known as Anti-Burghers.

The Burghers divided in 1796 over the power of civil magistrates in matters of religion. The two parties were known as Old Light Burghers and New Light Burghers. There was a similar division in the Anti-Burgher branch in 1806. There were thus four parties of Seceders. Each professed to adopt the Westminster Confession, but it also adhered to its own "testimony."

Thomas Campbell had been much concerned in his early youth about his salvation. He had been taught that man, being helpless, could do nothing until God called him by his grace and that when God did call him he would have such an experience that he would be certain of his salvation. He had been much troubled over his condition when he had

an experience which he interpreted as the assurance of God that he had been received as his child. He identified himself with the Anti-Burgher branch of the Seceder's wing of the Presbyterian Church. Having interpreted his experience at the time of his conversion as a call to preach, he entered the University of Glasgow to begin preparing himself for his life work. After graduation he completed the course in the Anti-Burgher seminary which was connected with the University of Glasgow.

During the time Thomas Campbell remained in Ireland he preached for Seceder churches and supplemented his salary by teaching school. About 1798 he moved to a farm near Rich Hill and became pastor of a near-by church at Ahorey. A little later he moved to Rich Hill where he conducted an academy in addition to his pastoral duties. There was at Rich Hill a church of the Independents, the Congregationalists being called Independents in Ireland, and Thomas Campbell frequently attended their meetings. There was a friendly relation between Mr. Campbell and Mr. Gibson, the pastor of the Independent Church. The Independents taught the independence of each local congregation and insisted on the right of each individual to interpret the Scriptures for himself. They were tolerant in spirit, and they undoubtedly exerted a helpful influence on Thomas Campbell.

2. Early efforts for union—

The sectarian spirit in Ireland was very pronounced at this time. Not only was there a bitter feeling among the different denominations, but there was a spirit of conflict among the various branches of the Presbyterian Church. The differences which had occasioned the divisions were magnified, and all the branches were characterized by a spirit of narrowness and bitterness. In addition to the main divisions there were little parties which had developed in the bitterness of controversy. The sectarian spirit is indicated by the fact that "in 1798 the Anti-Burgher Synod forbade the people to attend or give countenance to public preaching by any who were not of their communion," and a year afterwards actually deposed and excommunicated one of its ministers for having "heard Rowland Hill and James Haldane preach." The Burghers were equally intolerant, for a member was cited to appear before the Synod for working as a mason on an Episcopal church in Glasgow. It was decreed that "he ought not to be admitted to any of the seals of the covenant till he profess his sorrow for the offense and scandal that he had given and been guilty of."

Thomas Campbell was naturally tolerant in spirit and his views were broadened by his contact with the Independents at Rich Hill. He was sorely troubled by the narrowness and the intolerance of the

Christians of his day. He realized that this was contrary to the command of the Master that Christians should love one another. He knew there was little occasion for many of the divisions in the church, and especially in his own denomination. Some of the occasions which had brought about the divisions in Scotland were not present in Ireland. He felt that these divisions were not only unnecessary, but that they were in opposition to the Master's prayer for union.

One of Thomas Campbell's first public acts outside of his own congregation was in an effort for union. Under the influence of Campbell and others a conference was held at Rich Hill in 1804 to discuss the possibility of union between the Burghers and Anti-Burghers. A proposition for union, prepared by Mr. Campbell, was presented to the Synod at Belfast and was favorably received. In 1805 a joint meeting between the representatives of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers was held. There seemed to be a growing desire for union inasmuch as the Burgher oath was never required in Ireland, hence there was no real occasion for division. The General Associate Synod in Scotland, learning of the movements for union, expressed dissent, and the proposal was temporarily abandoned.

In 1806 another move was made in the direction of union. The Provincial Synod of Ireland made application to the Scottish Synod for permission to

regulate their own affairs. The purpose of making this request was to bring about the desired union in Ireland. Thomas Campbell was appointed to plead the case before the General Assembly in Glasgow. It was decided that the request was inexpedient, and the union of these two members of the Presbyterian family was further delayed. A spirit of good will that is once started will inevitably increase. That was true in this case, and the union was effected in 1820.

3. Thomas Campbell goes to America—

Mr. Campbell was disappointed at the outcome of his efforts for union, but his apparent failure increased his hatred of the sectarian spirit. The desire for union was not so easily quenched; it was to be kindled into a passion in the New World.

Under the strain of the double task of preaching and teaching Thomas Campbell was impaired in health. His physician insisted on an absolute change of pursuit such as would be offered by a long sea-voyage. In order that he might regain his health and investigate America with a view to moving his family thither he sailed for the New World in 1807. Alexander Campbell, who had grown to be a young man, was not only given charge of the family, but he agreed to carry on the work of the academy until the father should either return or send for the family to join him in America.

The religious situation in America at the beginning of the nineteenth century was no less confusing than it was in Ireland. Europe was Catholic when America was discovered in 1492. If a successful colonizing policy had been adopted at that time, America would undoubtedly have been Catholic from the start. More than a century was to pass before successful colonies were to be planted in the part which later became the United States, and, during that time, the nations which were to take the lead had become Protestant.

When America was colonized the religious conditions of Europe were transferred to the New World. These conditions, of course, were modified by the life of the wilderness. The Congregational Church was for a long time the established church of New England; the Anglican Church was the established church of the southern colonies; and there was a mixture of denominations in the middle colonies. The Dutch Reformed Church led in New York; the Lutheran Church was the most important one in Delaware; while the Quakers were prominent in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Baptists and Presbyterians were scattered throughout the middle colonies, and they were especially numerous in Pennsylvania.

A period of spiritual decline followed the American Revolution. This was occasioned in part

by the demoralizing influence of the long war which was waged in their midst. It was greatly aided by the deistic influence of France and England filtering into this country. During the latter part of the eighteenth century religion was perhaps at the lowest ebb which it ever reached in America. This period of moral and spiritual decline was followed in the closing years of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries by the second great awakening. This began in the western part of Kentucky and reached its climax at Cane Ridge, but it exerted a helpful influence throughout the country.

Pennsylvania was settled under the leadership of William Penn, hence the Quakers were an important element in the eastern part of the state. All denominations, however, were welcomed from the first. The Treaty of Paris, which concluded the war between France and England in 1763, opened the western part of Pennsylvania to settlement by the English. Scotch-Irish immigrants poured across the Alleghenies into this new section. These Scotch-Irish were naturally Presbyterians, and they brought their faith with them and established churches in their new home. In 1781 the Redstone Presbytery, in western Pennsylvania, was established by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. There were at this time only four preachers in the Presbytery. The first house of worship was erected in 1790, the

meetings having been held in groves and private houses before this time.

Political troubles, religious dissension, and economic pressure forced many immigrants from the north of Ireland to the United States. Many Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from Thomas Campbell's neighborhood joined the procession over the Allegheny Mountains to western Pennsylvania. In 1807 Thomas Campbell obtained leave of absence from his work and set sail for America. It was natural that he should go to the part where so many Scotch-Irish had already gone.

Thomas Campbell brought his credentials from the Presbyterian Church, expecting to continue his preaching while in America. When he landed at Philadelphia in May, 1807, he found the Synod of his branch of the Presbyterian Church in session. He was graciously received by them and recommended to the Chartiers Presbytery which was in the western part of the state. Many of his friends in Ireland had already preceded him to this locality. He was assigned to a group of scattered churches in Washington County. He entered at once upon his labors, having no thought but that he would carry on the regular work of the Seceder's branch of the Presbyterian Church. He was led, however, by force of circumstances into a path which he had not foreseen, and he became the pioneer of a new movement.

4. Breaks with the Presbyterians—

Thomas Campbell was soon very much disappointed in the religious conditions in western Pennsylvania. He had been troubled over the divisions in the Old World and had hoped that the spirit of liberty in the New World would tend to cultivate a closer fellowship among the churches. In this he was to be sorely disappointed. The Anti-Burghers were the first Presbyterians to arrive in western Pennsylvania, and many of the Burghers who joined the stream of immigrants took membership with them. This did not broaden their vision, for the church in the western wilderness became more exclusive and intolerant than the church in Scotland and Ireland. In 1796 it passed a law against "occasional communion" which was in force at the time of the arrival of Mr. Campbell.

The members of the Seceder Church were widely scattered in that newly-settled country, and in their midst there were members of other denominations who were without church affiliation. There were members of other branches of the Presbyterian Church who were without any pastoral oversight. They did not seek membership in the Anti-Burgher Church, and, unless they did this and complied with the regulations, they were treated as aliens. Thomas Campbell, being a man of liberal spirit and broad culture, wanted to be of service to all Christians. There were in the community some Independents

and some members of other Presbyterian branches who had known Mr. Campbell in Ireland, and they naturally sought his fellowship in this new land; he just as naturally welcomed them and extended to them the ministrations of the church. Mr. Campbell could not understand the narrowness and bigotry which would object to any Christian service.

On account of his scholarship, general culture, and natural leadership Thomas Campbell was given a hearty welcome by the Chartiers Presbytery. He was soon recognized as a leader, but it was not long until some of his ministerial brethren began to regard him with suspicion because of his apparent disregard of ecclesiastical regulations and because of his fraternizing attitude towards the members of other churches. This suspicion found ground for action when Mr. Campbell was on a preaching tour with a young minister by the name of Wilson. The purpose of this tour was to administer the Lord's Supper to the members of the Seceder Church who were scattered over that sparsely settled country. They found members of other branches of the Presbyterian Church who had not for years had the privilege of coming to the Lord's Table. Mr. Campbell, moved by this condition, did the thing which he believed was Christian regardless of church regulations. In the preparatory service he expressed regret at the divided condition of the church which made it difficult for many sections to have the min-

istrations of the church, and he urged all who were prepared for the service, regardless of party differences, to enjoy the privilege of the communion which was offered to them.

Mr. Wilson, becoming convinced that Thomas Campbell was not true to the doctrines of the Seceder Church, brought charges against him before the Presbytery. Because of the suspicion which already existed the Presbytery was glad to act upon these charges. Sectarianism is always more anxious to maintain its own position than it is to save the world. Several complaints were included in the charges, but the main accusation against him was that he violated the rules and usages of the church in practising open communion. It was asserted that he even criticised some of the regulations of the church. Mr. Campbell was anxious to maintain harmonious relations with his brethren, but, having protested against divisions in Ireland, he could not be true to his convictions if he gave his sanction to sectarian bickerings in America. When he was questioned about his position, he declared that he was opposed to a narrow party spirit in religion, but he insisted that he had not done anything contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures.

Mr. Campbell was very much surprised and disappointed when the Presbytery voted that he was deserving of censure for the course which he had pursued. He protested against this decision and

appealed to the Synod. Suspicion is always contagious and he soon realized that those who had opposed him before the Presbytery were inciting greater opposition to him. He could not retract the position he had taken, for he was certain that it was sanctioned by the Scriptures, but he realized it would be difficult for him to continue as a minister in the Seceder Church if the Synod sanctioned the action of the Presbytery. Mr. Campbell was in a dilemma; he wanted to be true to his convictions, and he did not want to break with the Presbyterian Church. A man who had a passion for union would be slow to take a step which would cause further division.

With the desire of frankly stating his position, and at the same time smoothing over the difficulty so that he might continue laboring in perfect harmony with the Presbyterians, he addressed a letter to the Synod. This letter is significant because it plainly indicates the course which he was soon to take. He declared that he had done "none other things than those which our Divine Lord and his holy apostles have taught and enjoined to be spoken and done by his ministering servants, and to be received and observed by all his people." He assured them that he would gladly abandon any practice which was not in harmony with the Scriptures, for he did not think it right "to teach anything as a matter of faith or duty but what is already ex-

pressly taught and enjoined by Divine authority." He further declared that he regarded "as inadmissible and schismatic, the introduction of human opinions and human inventions into the faith and worship of the church." He asked whether he was to be thrust out of the church because he refused to acknowledge as binding on himself, or to impose on others, anything as of divine obligation for which there could not be produced a "thus saith the Lord." He further assured them that he was anxious to remain united with them in carrying on the work which they had undertaken.

A man who is broad in spirit is not able to understand those who are dominated by sectarianism. The Synod found irregularities in the proceedings of the Presbytery and set aside the decision of censure. It decided, however, that his answers were so evasive and unsatisfactory as to imply that he held sentiments different from those professed by the church, and that there were "sufficient grounds to infer censure." This action virtually placed him under the condemnation of his brethren.

A breach in the household of faith is difficult to mend, and it was soon necessary for Thomas Campbell to withdraw from the Presbyterians and begin to preach independently. His recent experiences naturally determined the character of his message. He condemned the sectarian spirit and called on the people of God to come together as one family. His

ambition in Scotland had been to unite two small branches of the Presbyterian family; he now had a vision of the union of all the people of God.

Questions on the Chapter

1. What was Thomas Campbell's early religious environment?
2. Discuss Thomas Campbell's first effort in behalf of union.
3. Why did Thomas Campbell come to America?
4. What was the religious condition of Western Pennsylvania at the beginning of the nineteenth century?
5. Why did Thomas Campbell break with the Presbyterian Church?

Questions for Discussion

1. Why does a sectarian environment narrow one person and broaden another?
2. Why do churches divide over unimportant issues?
3. Does a realization of need promote union?
4. To what extent should a church bind its leaders?
5. To what extent should one hold convictions in abeyance in the interest of harmony?

Chapter III

The Program of the Declaration and Address

The most important document connected with the history of the Disciples is undoubtedly the *Declaration and Address*. It was the issuing of this document which furnished the occasion for the centennial celebration in Pittsburgh in 1909. It was important because it gave purpose and direction to a movement which developed into one of the most important of the American churches. All in our day who are interested in Christian union should familiarize themselves with this wonderful document which was formulated in the interest of union more than a century ago. Disciples who are in the least degree interested in their own church, in its history and its ideals, should become acquainted with the *Declaration and Address*. They should know the conditions out of which it was born, the program which it outlines, and the spirit in which this program is suggested.

1. Preaches independently—

Thomas Campbell was persuaded by some of his brethren to submit to the mild censure imposed on him by the Synod, but he handed in a statement to

the effect "that his submission should be understood to mean no more, on his part, than an act of deference to the judgment of the court, that, by so doing, he might not give offense to his brethren by manifesting a refractory spirit." He hoped that this would settle the matter and he could go on with his work. In this he was disappointed, for those who had opposed him became more bitter in their attacks. Spies attended his services and he was misrepresented and maligned. He finally served notice on the Synod that he did not consider himself under its authority, for he had abandoned all ministerial connection with it.

This was a serious step for Thomas Campbell. He was alone in the New World, waiting for his family to join him. When he left the Presbyterians he went forth not knowing whither he was to go. He continued to preach on an independent basis. His meetings which were held in barns, groves and private houses were attended by members of the various denominations who were interested in his plea for liberty and union. The experiences through which he had passed forced him to take a decided stand against sectarianism. His being censured for taking a position which he believed was in harmony with the Bible led him to emphasize the authority of the Scriptures over against the authority of creeds. He soon had a group of followers who were in

sympathy with his position and looked to him for leadership.

A meeting was called of those who were interested in the religious situation of which Thomas Campbell was the center to talk over plans for the future. This meeting was held in the western part of Pennsylvania, between Mt. Pleasant and Washington, in the home of Abraham Altars. Most of those present were church members, but they were dissatisfied with the narrow sectarian spirit which was manifested. This was a very important meeting because a program was being formulated in the minds of a little group of people who were soon to commit themselves to its realization. Mr. Campbell rehearsed the evils which were resulting from a divided church. He declared that these divisions had been occasioned by the exaltation of human opinions. He confidently affirmed that union could be brought about if all would go back to the simple teachings of the Scriptures. As the spokesman of the little group, he declared it was his purpose to live according to the divine rule. That rule, as he stated it, became the slogan of the movement—"Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

Perhaps none of those present in the home of Mr. Altars realized whither the rule would lead them. One did intimate that it would lead to the abandonment of infant baptism, but Thomas Campbell did

not feel that it would necessarily do this. That rule proved to be a means of testing in the group. Those who were unwilling to be led from their old moorings turned back when they saw the implications of the rule announced by their leader. Those who were anxious to follow what they believed was the divine leading committed themselves enthusiastically to the new program.

2. The Christian Association formed—

Another important meeting was held on the 17th of August, 1809, at which time those who accepted the new program organized themselves under the name of "The Christian Association of Washington." Two important steps were taken at this meeting. A committee of twenty-one was appointed to confer with Thomas Campbell in regard to plans for carrying out the purposes of the Association. It was decided to erect a simple building to centralize their efforts. The men came together and erected a log building which became the cradle of this movement for union. This building, which was about three miles from Mt. Pleasant on the road leading to Washington, was used for school purposes as well as for the meetings of the Association. The committee of twenty-one was to propose plans for future proceedings.

The outcome of the deliberations of the committee which was appointed by the meeting which organ-

ized The Christian Association of Washington was the *Declaration and Address*. It was written by Thomas Campbell in a little upstairs room in the home of Mr. Welch and was unanimously approved and ordered published September 7, 1809. The adoption of this statement by the little group of followers of Thomas Campbell was the inauguration of the movement which developed into the Christian Church.

The *Declaration and Address* was in reality the constitution of the Christian Association of Washington, and its purposes and aims were very definitely stated in the introduction. They declared that they had rejected "human opinions and the inventions of men" as of any authority in the church of God, and had taken the word of God as their only rule, and they invited their brethren to join with them on this basis. The purpose of the Association was to promote simple, evangelical Christianity, freed from the entanglements of human opinions. It was not a church, but a voluntary organization for the promotion of church reformation. The Association, in the interest of the promotion of evangelical Christianity, pledged itself to countenance and support only those ministers who had abandoned the traditions of men and were conforming to the Scriptural standards. They declared it their purpose to use all possible means to encourage the formation of other associations. A standing committee of twenty-

one, including the secretary and treasurer, was to be elected annually to manage the affairs of the Association. The members of the Association were urged to subscribe specified sums, according to their ability, for the promotion of a "pure gospel ministry" and to furnish copies of the Scriptures to the poor. These sums were to be paid semi-annually before the time of the regular meetings of the Association. The collectors were to make their reports to the treasurer at or before these regular meetings which were the first Thursday of May and November. Although these meetings were for business, a sermon was to be preached and the *Declaration and Address* was to be read. The members of the Association were anxious to conduct an active propaganda in the interest of union, hence it was urged that the contributions be large enough so that ministers could be sent "to preach at considerable distances."

3. Union urged—

The address was issued "to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in all sincerity, throughout all the churches," and it was an appeal for union. It states that one purpose of religion is to unite men to each other. The divisions which have come into the church have so perverted the original purpose of religion that members of churches seek to injure one another. These divisions have been disastrous to the progress of Christianity. Congregations have

been destroyed; whole communities have been left without the ministrations of the church; and many individuals who are within reach of a church dare not accept its ministrations because they belong to a different party. On account of the conditions which prevail because of the divided state of the church, "the truly religious of all parties are grieved, the weak stumbled, the graceless hardened, the mouths of infidels opened to blasphemous religion."

The supreme duty of Christians is to help unite the divided church. The responsibility rests especially upon the preachers who are the leaders of the church, and they are urged to work for the things for which they pray. Inasmuch as they felt that union was of imperative importance, the members of this organization had no hesitation in making their appeal to others for co-operation. The small beginning did not deter them, because anything that is done must have a beginning, and they believed that if the thing undertaken is of the Lord it will prosper regardless of its humble origin. They held that it is always in order to do the thing that is right.

Thomas Campbell felt that there were many reasons for confidence in the success of the movement which they had launched. The character of America seemed to be favorable to such an undertaking. America was free from the repressing influence of

an established church, and the Roman hierarchy did not have a direct bearing on American life. The times were propitious. Since the beginning of the French Revolution there had been a greater missionary zeal in the church, and the leaders both in Europe and America were much concerned about the contentions arising out of divisions. Those who sought union had the Lord on their side; they were working for the thing for which Christ had prayed.

Believing they were undertaking the thing which Christ wanted done, the members of the Christian Association of Washington were confident of success. It was not their own cause, nor the cause of any party; it was the cause of Christ and of all denominations. Because of this conviction they were bold in inviting others to join them in their undertaking. They were not a church, but merely an association to work for the union of all churches on the Scriptural basis.

4. The program suggested—

In these days when there is so much talk about union it is important that the Disciples should make a careful study of the program of the great charter of their movement. Those of other communions who are interested in union can with profit study the program of this historic document.

a) The church is one.—This document insists that the church of Christ upon earth is one. This is put

in the strongest terms: it is "essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one." This one church consists "of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures." Thomas Campbell believed the members of the various denominations who followed Christ as he is revealed in the Scriptures belonged to this church. Most of the members of the Christian Association of Washington who unanimously approved the *Declaration and Address* were members of the various denominations of the community.

It was frequently asserted that the Association was not a church, but merely an association of the members of different churches to investigate the causes of divisions and to pray for union. In the lengthy appendix, which was added to prevent misunderstanding, it was strongly maintained that it was not their "intention to interfere either directly or indirectly with the peace and order of the established churches." It was not their purpose to send out ministers to make inroads on these churches. They were not planning to divide congregations, or build churches by drawing folk away from their own denominations. They did not profess to have made a discovery that would entitle them to invite others to become their followers, but they did invite others to co-operate with them to work for the union of the people of God.

Because the church is one there ought to be no uncharitable divisions. If all have the same Master, they should gladly receive one another. If the church is one, Christians should act accordingly. They should love each other, and trust each other, and receive each other. According to this document, the church is not a joining together of discordant elements; it is a real union of those who follow the same Christ and read the same Bible.

b) *The constitution of the church.*—According to the *Declaration and Address*, there are not different constitutions for different churches; the church is one and there is but one constitution. That constitution is not a creedal statement, or a confession of faith; it is the New Testament itself. The church has no right to impose upon Christians as articles of faith anything which is not expressly taught in the Scriptures. Nothing should be received into the constitution of the church as of divine authority that was not enjoined upon the New Testament church “either in expressed terms, or by approved precedent.”

Distinction is made between the authority of the Old Testament and the New. They are inseparably connected, and both are necessary for a complete record of the revelation of the divine will. Both are necessary for the edification of the church, but they are not of equal importance for the church. The Old Testament was the constitution of the Old Testa-

ment church; it outlined the worship, discipline and government of the Jewish community, and prescribed the duties of its members. The New Testament is the constitution of the New Testament church; it outlines the worship, discipline, and government of the Christian community, and prescribes the particular duties of its members.

The *Declaration and Address* does not oppose creeds and confessions of faith. Such opposition is expressly denied in the Appendix. Creeds and confessions of faith are opposed only when they mar the unity of the church by imposing on God's children the opinions of men. "It is the abuse and not the careful use" which is condemned. It is very definitely stated that for the understanding of the Scriptures "the Westminster Confession and Catechisms may, with many other excellent performances, prove eminently useful."

c) Basis of fellowship.—Perhaps the most important phase of the union question relates to the conditions of entrance into the church and the basis of fellowship between members. Because of the sectarian spirit of denominationalism church members have been willing to recognize the Christian character of those whom they would not fellowship in the church. The members of the Chartiers Presbytery, who gave Thomas Campbell a vote of censure because he invited to the communion table the members of other branches of the Presbyterian Church,

undoubtedly recognized these people as Christians. The question was not in regard to their salvation, but concerning fellowship. Inasmuch as they did not accept the regulations of the Seceder Church they were not entitled to their fellowship. We face the same problem to-day. The members of one denomination are willing to recognize the Christian character of the members of another denomination, but they are not willing to fellowship them.

The *Declaration and Address* protests against making human systems the basis of fellowship, for these divide rather than unite. Nothing shall be made "a term of communion amongst Christians that is not as old as the New Testament." It is proper to make inferences and deductions from the Scriptures, but these should not be made terms of communion. Deductions and inferences cannot be binding on the individual conscience unless they are realized as truth by that individual, hence they have no place in the confession of the church.

Doctrinal systems are of great benefit and should be worked out with great care, but, inasmuch as these systems are the result of human reasoning and are based on inferences, they should not be made terms of communion in the church. If adherence to a doctrinal system is the basis of fellowship, church membership must be limited to those who are intellectually trained; but from the first the church has had children among its members.

It is not necessary that one should understand all the truths of the Bible in order to be a member of the church, and he should not be required to make a profession that is more extensive than his knowledge. The knowledge required of one is very meager: a realization of one's sinful condition and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. One should be required to make a confession of faith in Christ and assert his willingness to obey him in all things according to the Scriptures. Loyalty to Christ was virtually made the basis of fellowship. That is emphasized in the Appendix which was written to prevent misunderstandings concerning statements made in the *Declaration and Address*. It declares that "a manifest attachment to our Lord Jesus Christ in faith, holiness, and charity, was the original criterion of Christian character—the distinguishing badge of our holy profession—the foundation and cement of Christian unity."

Thomas Campbell in his address at the meeting in the home of Abraham Altars announced the slogan of the movement which they were inaugurating, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." The same thought is expressed in the Appendix, "We dare therefore neither do, nor receive anything, as of divine obligation, for which there cannot be expressly produced a 'thus saith the Lord' either in expressed terms, or by approved precedent." It is

necessary to make a study of the *Declaration and Address* to see how Thomas Campbell interpreted his own slogan, if we would understand his position. It is evident that he accepted it as a principle rather than as an ironclad rule which was to be rigidly enforced. He made a sharp distinction between an "express Scripture declaration" and an "inference which may be deduced from it." Only the former was to be insisted on as a matter of faith; the latter was regarded as a matter of opinion. "The express Scripture declaration" which Mr. Campbell had in mind referred to the fact that man is a sinner and can be saved through faith in Christ and obedience to him. He was not thinking of a detailed interpretation of the Bible, for he realized that individuals would differ widely in their interpretations and that they were free to do the will of God according to their own best judgment. He said that, inasmuch as there were divergent opinions in the early church which was composed of Jews and Gentiles, so there would undoubtedly be differences of opinion in a time when the church was torn by sectarianism.

Mr. Campbell felt that if the church would take the New Testament as its standard, and magnify the important things and stop wrangling over minor differences, these differences would soon disappear. He believed these differences had been continued and increased by the contention over them. He

said, "Many of the opinions which are now dividing the church, had they been let alone, would have been, long since, dead and gone; but the constant insisting on them as articles of faith and terms of salvation has so beat them into the minds of men that, in many instances, they would as soon deny the Bible itself as give up one of these opinions."

5. Estimate of the document—

The *Declaration and Address* was not a perfect document. There was room for controversy over what was "an express Scripture declaration" which was evident to all, and hence a matter of faith, and "an inference which may be deduced from it" which was not so evident, and hence was a matter of opinion. The distinction seems to imply that while some passages of Scripture must be interpreted, others are so plain that they do not need interpretation. This, of course, is open to objection, for what seems plain to one mind may not be so plain to another. Accepting the New Testament as a standard may develop into a fixed interpretation of the New Testament which is as binding and unchanging as any creed.

Notwithstanding these objections which may be brought against it, the *Declaration and Address* is one of the greatest documents of the church. It was the honest attempt of a few people, guided by a great soul, to unite the divided church. The pro-

gram which they put forth looked in the right direction, and, although it was written over a century ago, it is doubtful whether this program for union has ever been surpassed.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Give an account of the forming of the Christian Association of Washington.
2. What was the purpose of the Christian Association of Washington?
3. What is the conception of the church that is stated in the *Declaration and Address*?
4. According to the *Declaration and Address*, what is the constitution of the church?
5. What does the *Declaration and Address* make the basis of fellowship in the church?

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it necessary for a Christian to work in connection with a religious body?
2. Why is Christian union desirable?
3. How would union be promoted if all Christians should regard each other as brethren?
4. What should be made the basis of fellowship in the church?
5. What value has the *Declaration and Address* at the present time?

Chapter IV

Alexander Campbell and the Restoration of the Ancient Order

While Thomas Campbell launched the movement which developed into the communion known as the Disciples, it was Alexander who determined the course which that movement was to take. He it was who led the campaign for the restoration of the ancient order of things, and it was that campaign which ultimately brought the advocates together into a distinct communion. This campaign was not inaugurated suddenly; it developed through careful study of the New Testament, for their only desire was to do the will of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures. To understand Alexander Campbell's contribution through the campaign for the restoration of the ancient order it is necessary to trace the development from the adoption of the *Declaration and Address*.

1. Alexander Campbell joins his father—

While Thomas Campbell was having his difficulties in America, his son Alexander was having his soul-struggles in Scotland. After he began to think about the ministry as a life-calling he became inter-

ested in the study of the history of the church. He had come under the influence of the Independents at Rich Hill before his father sailed for America. The family set sail in the early part of October, 1808, to join Thomas Campbell in the New World. Having been detained by shipwreck Alexander spent the following year in the University of Glasgow. Here he came under the influence of Greville Ewing and the Haldanes who were leaders of the Independents. During this year he became very much unsettled in his religious convictions. He became so estranged from the Seceder Church that it appears that he did not go to communion during the year that he was in Glasgow University.

Alexander Campbell and the family landed in America on the twenty-ninth of September, 1809, and on the twenty-eighth of October reached Washington, Pennsylvania. Thomas Campbell met the family about three days' journey from Washington. Alexander was much impressed when the father related his experiences in America and informed them that on account of religious bigotry he had found it necessary to sever his connection with the Seceder Church. He felt, in the light of his own experience in the University of Glasgow, that they had both been providentially led in the same direction.

The proof sheets of the *Declaration and Address* were just off the press when the Campbells reached

Washington, and Alexander had the joyful experience of reading them for his father. He was greatly impressed by the position taken in the document, and felt that he could gladly commit his life to the program that was outlined. He was fascinated by the sentences which made the New Testament the constitution of the church, and the impression made at that time undoubtedly determined the part which he was later to take. That is indicated in *An Address to the Public*, published in the *Christian Baptist* of September 6, 1824, in which he makes the following statement:

“I commenced my career in this country under the conviction that nothing that was not as old as the New Testament should be made an article of faith, a rule of practice, or a term of communion amongst Christians. In a word, that the whole of the Christian religion exhibited in prophecy and type of the Old Testament, was presented in the fullest, clearest, and most perfect manner of the New Testament by the spirit of wisdom and revelation. This has been the pole-star of my career ever since, and I thank God that he has enabled me so far to prosecute it, and to make all my prejudices and ambition bow to this emancipating principle.”

2. Overtures to Presbyterians—

The Christian Association of Washington was not a church; it was an organization of members of

different denominations in the interest of union. Their ideal was not a new denomination, but a union of all the churches of the community which would bind them together in the closest fellowship. Believing their movement was of God and that people were anxious to do the will of God, they felt that it would soon sweep the country. They did not, however, fully comprehend the strength of the sectarian spirit or how devoted people are to their traditions, hence they were to be disappointed in the realization of their ideals. Instead of rallying to their call, the members of the different denominations at first ignored them, then later opposed them.

Their action which was intended for good had isolated the members of the Association from the other churches and they were regarded as a new sect. The force of circumstances had placed them in an embarrassing position. Their purpose in organizing had been to bind in closer unity the different denominations, but they were in danger of merely adding another denomination to divided Christendom. To prevent this further division Thomas Campbell on October 4, 1810, about one year after the publication of the *Declaration and Address*, made application to the Synod of Pittsburg for membership. Inasmuch as he represented the Association, he was seeking membership not only for himself but for the whole Association. He went before the Synod in person, explained the plans and ideals

of the Association, made a full statement of his own religious views, and upon the basis of that statement asked to be received into membership.

It is evident that Mr. Campbell did not intend to abandon the work for which the Association was organized; he sought rather to link it up with the Presbyterian Church. The Synod by unanimous vote refused membership to Mr. Campbell and the Association of which he was the leader. The principal reasons assigned were that the Association would promote divisions rather than union, would degrade the ministerial character, introduce errors in doctrine, and corrupt discipline.

3. Brush Run Church organized—

The refusal of the Synod of Pittsburg to receive Thomas Campbell and his associates into fellowship changed the course of the Association. It is impossible to conjecture what would have happened to the movement if they had been received, but, being rejected, they were soon led to form an independent church. Alexander Campbell was opposed to his father's making overtures to the Presbyterians. According to a statement in his *Address to the Public*, to which reference was made above, he had, three months before the overtures were made, publicly declared his "convictions of the independency of the church of Christ and the excellency and authority of the Scriptures." Shortly after the vote of rejec-

tion by the Synod he delivered the address at the semi-annual meeting of the Association in which he reviewed at length the objections put forth against them.

Both father and son continued to preach in school houses and private homes, advocating the principles of the *Declaration and Address*. Opposition on the part of the churches led them to be more aggressive in their attacks on sectarianism; it led them also to a careful study of the Scriptures for proof of their positions. In this study new light broke upon them and there was development in their plan and program.

Cut off from fellowship with other churches it was evident that they would soon be forced to organize themselves into a new church. This was the vital question when the Association met in May, 1811, and on the fourth day of the month the Brush Run Church was duly organized. Thomas Campbell was appointed elder, four deacons were chosen, and Alexander Campbell was licensed to preach. Thomas Campbell examined those who expressed a willingness to enter the organization in regard to their fitness. To each he propounded the question, "What is the meritorious cause of a sinner's acceptance with God?" Two were rejected because their answers were unsatisfactory. When they met for formal organization, Alexander Campbell objected to the question being put to a member who had not

been present on the previous occasion. Not only was he admitted without answering the question, but it was never put to anyone else as a test of membership.

The question of baptism came up very early in their deliberations. When Thomas Campbell closed his speech in the home of Abraham Altars with the dictum—"Where the Scriptures speak, etc.," a Scotch Seeder by the name of Andrew Munro arose and said, "Mr. Campbell, if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism." Thomas Campbell did not at this time feel that strict adherence to the Scriptures would necessarily lead to the abandonment of infant baptism. In fact, he did not want to give up infant baptism, and when he was asked a little later by James Foster how he could baptize a child when there is no authority in the Word of God, he replied, "Sir, you are the most intractable person I ever met."

The question of baptism came up in a very practical form shortly after the organization of the Brush Run Church. Some of the members became so firm in their conviction on the subject that they refused to commune on the ground that they had never been baptized. Three of these, Joseph Bryant, Margaret Fullerton and Abraham Altars, were immersed by Thomas Campbell July 4, 1811. He baptized these candidates by standing on a roof that projected over the water. James Foster did not approve of this

method of administering the ordinance, and he had his doubts about the right of one who had not been immersed to immerse others.

Alexander Campbell was away from home on a preaching tour when these immersions took place, but he was forced by them to a careful investigation of the whole subject. In his *Address to the Public* he said, "In conformity to the grand principle which I have called the polestar of my course of religious inquiry, I was led to question the claims of infant sprinkling to divine authority, and was, after a long, serious, and prayerful examination of all means of information, led to solicit immersion on a profession of my faith."

4. Affiliate with Baptists—

When Alexander Campbell became convinced that infant baptism was without Scriptural warrant, he felt that he had never been baptized. When the two Campbells first discussed the subject of infant baptism the father was very much perplexed. Alexander felt that there was no expressed precedent in the New Testament for the baptizing of infants. The father said: "It is merely inferential, but to the law and testimony we make our appeal. If not found therein, we, of course, must abandon it." It was not so difficult for him to abandon infant baptism, or immerse adults who had never been sprinkled, but it seemed to him like sacrilege to

think about immersing those who had previously been sprinkled. He said, "We could not unchurch ourselves now and go out into the world and then turn back again and enter the church merely for the sake of form or decorum."

Alexander Campbell finally made up his mind to be immersed, but he was hesitant about disclosing the fact to his father. He was determined to be immersed by one who not only believed and practiced that mode but had also been immersed, hence he sought the services of a Baptist preacher by the name of Matthias Luce. It was when he was on his way to confer with Mr. Luce that he stopped at his father's to tell him that he, his wife, and his sister Dorothea had made up their minds to be immersed. The father was somewhat surprised, but he only remarked, "I have no more to add. You must please yourself."

Alexander Campbell had arranged with Mr. Luce that they were to be baptized on the simple confession that "Jesus is the Son of God," and it was further agreed that he should use "into the name, etc.," instead of "in" which was the regular form with the Baptists. The baptisms were in Buffalo Creek June 12, 1812. Not only were Alexander Campbell, his wife and his sister baptized, but his father and mother and two others followed their example. The services lasted about seven hours,

for the baptisms were preceded by two lengthy sermons by the Campbells.

This action of the Campbells produced radical changes in the Brush Run Church. About twenty were immersed the Sunday following the immersion of the Campbells, and in a short time there were about a hundred immersed members in this church. This led to a new alignment, for those who did not favor immersion withdrew. The Brush Run Church had practically become a Baptist church although it did not bear that name.

This new departure of the Brush Run Church separated them entirely from the Pedobaptist churches, but it brought them into favor with the Baptist churches. They were invited to unite with the Redstone Association which was composed of the Baptist churches of that section. After Alexander Campbell took the initiative in baptism he seems to have been more and more recognized as the leader. He attended the meeting of the Redstone Association at Uniontown, Pennsylvania, in the fall of 1812. He was cordially received and urged to preach in Baptist churches. During the following year he spoke in many Baptist churches and was urged by all to join their Association.

In the fall of 1812 the members of the Brush Run Church formulated a statement upon which they would be willing to unite with the Redstone Association. They expressed their disapproval of human

creeds, and insisted that they should be allowed to preach and teach whatever they learned from the Holy Scriptures "regardless of any creed or formula in Christendom." After much discussion a majority voted in favor of their being received. Inasmuch as the Redstone Association had adopted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, they manifested great liberality in receiving the Brush Run Church on the statement which it presented. There were many in the Association, however, who were opposed to receiving them on this statement, for they believed they would be inviting trouble by doing so.

5. Hold to original purpose—

Although the Campbells and their associates regarded themselves as Baptists after their union with the Redstone Association, they held to their original purpose as it was expressed in the *Declaration and Address*. There were many points on which they were not in agreement with the Baptists, and these differences became more marked as time passed. The thinking of this little group had become so fixed during the four years between the issuing of the *Declaration and Address* and their union with the Baptists that they continued to hold and teach their independent views. As has already been noted in the account of the baptism of the Campbells, they differed in many points on the administration of baptism. The Baptists required of the candidate

for baptism a statement of Christian experience; the Campbells were baptized on the simple confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God. The Baptists used "in the name" as a part of the formula, while Alexander Campbell insisted on the use of "into." Later the design of baptism came to be a matter of much discussion.

They differed from the first on the administration of the Lord's Supper. The Baptist churches celebrated the Lord's Supper monthly, or quarterly, while the Brush Run Church celebrated this ordinance every Lord's Day. They differed on the significance of ordination. Although Alexander Campbell was ordained in the early part of 1812, he believed a man could perform the ministerial functions without ordination. He had much to say about the false distinctions which were made between the clergy and the laity. They differed on the relation between the two covenants. The emphasis on the distinction between the two covenants in a sermon, preached before the Redstone Association in 1816 by Alexander Campbell, led to charges of heresy against him. The Baptists, being Calvinists, regarded faith as the gift of God which produces a new attitude on the part of the individual; but the Campbells and their associates believed faith rests with the individual, for it rests on testimony that Jesus is the Son of God and it implies the acceptance of him, as such.

The members of the Brush Run Church did not feel obligated to hold in abeyance these beliefs which were not in harmony with the Baptist views. They had declared in the statement upon which they had been received into the Association that they would teach and preach the New Testament truths as they understood them. In harmony with that declaration Alexander Campbell traveled extensively among the Baptist churches advocating his peculiar views.

6. The restoration of the ancient order—

As time passed the views of Alexander Campbell became formulated in one purpose and that was the restoration of the ancient order of things. As he traveled among the Baptist churches his aim was to reform them and make them as nearly as possible like the New Testament church. His preaching met with a hearty response and he made converts wherever he went. Those who adhered to his purpose, and they were a constantly increasing number, became known as Reformers.

In 1823 Alexander Campbell began publishing the *Christian Baptist* for the advocacy of the views to which he was committed. The *Christian Baptist* had wide circulation and made many adherents to the movement which was sweeping through the Baptist churches. Although there were many important contributors, prominent among whom was Walter Scott,

Alexander Campbell was the leading spirit. In this magazine he criticized those things in the church which he felt were not conforming to New Testament teaching. The clergy came in for their share of criticism. The most bitter articles written by Alexander Campbell were against the clergy, and that was because of the character of the ministers of that part of the New World. The Baptist ministers of that section were rather ordinary men, "little men in a big office" as he expressed it, and their opposition to him led him to say many harsh things against them as a class. Mr. Campbell said when he came to know the Baptists better he thought more of the members and less of the preachers.

His opposition to creeds led him to criticize the Philadelphia Confession of Faith which was generally accepted by the Baptist churches. There was much criticism also of the associations. Mr. Campbell maintained that there was no scriptural warrant for the authority which they had assumed.

In 1824 Alexander Campbell began a series of articles on "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things." This series was continued in the following issues until there were thirty-two articles in all. In these articles every phase of the New Testament church was discussed and the importance of restoring that church was emphasized. As a result of these articles "The Ancient Order of Things" became a favorite phrase, and in 1826 those who

adhered to this program were designated by a religious editor in Kentucky as "Restorationers," or "Campbellites." The advocates of reform objected to the term "Campbellites," but they liked the term "Restorationers," and gradually they came to designate their project as "The Restoration Movement."

Questions on the Chapter

1. Why was Alexander Campbell pleased with the movement inaugurated by his father?
2. Why did Thomas Campbell and his followers organize the Brush Run Church?
3. What led the Campbells to seek immersion?
4. What effect did affiliation with the Baptists have on their program for union?
5. What basis did Alexander Campbell suggest for union?

Questions for Discussion

1. On what grounds might one be justified in launching a new communion?
2. When one is not within reach of a Christian Church is he justified in joining another body?
3. Can one who was sprinkled be immersed without denying his former profession of religion?
4. What basis could be suggested for the union of Christians?
5. To what extent would the restoration of the ancient order be desirable?

Chapter V

The Disciples a Distinct Communion

One of the surprises of history is that movements do not progress according to the plans of their originators. The movement inaugurated by Thomas Campbell was for the union of the scattered and hostile forces of the church, but within less than a quarter of a century that movement had become a distinct communion which left the church outwardly further divided than it was before.

1. Sincere desire for union—

In the formation of the Christian Association of Washington, Thomas Campbell and his associates were free from all sectarian spirit. Mr. Campbell had been condemned by the Presbyterians for doing what he believed the Master would approve. He was unsectarian in his desire to minister to scattered Christians who did not belong to his particular group. When he was denied this privilege he felt that the Christian spirit demanded that he minister independently to those to whom the Seceder Church would not permit him to minister.

When Thomas Campbell led in forming the Christian Association of Washington, he had no thought that he was starting another church. Article four

of the *Declaration* specifically denies any such purpose, "That this Society by no means considers itself a church, nor does at all assume to itself the powers peculiar to such a society; nor do the members, as such, consider themselves as standing connected in that relation; nor as at all associated for the peculiar purpose of church association;—but merely as voluntary advocates for church reformation." It is asserted in the Appendix that the members of the Association had no desire to interfere in any way with the established churches, "We beg leave to assure our brethren, that we have no intention to interfere, either directly or indirectly, with the peace and order of the settled churches, by directing any ministerial assistance with which the Lord may please to favor us, to make inroads upon such; or, by endeavoring to erect churches out of churches—to distract and divide congregations."

It was the purpose of Thomas Campbell to form other associations which would work for union, and through these create a sentiment which would bring the churches together. This purpose was born in an unsectarian heart which did not understand the bitterness of denominationalism. Other associations were not formed, and the members of the churches opposed the one which had been formed. They charged them with trying to start another denomination and of further dividing and alienating the

churches. This criticism and his desire for union led Thomas Campbell to seek fellowship for himself and his group in the Synod of Pittsburg. His passion for union was more important than church fellowship, and he informed the Synod that he intended to continue his overtures for union as outlined in the *Declaration and Address*.

This desire for union led the Brush Run Church to affiliate with the Baptists. After they had accepted immersion they were more nearly like the Baptists than the other communions, and they sought through this denomination to work out their program for union. The Campbells and their associates had no thought of abandoning their efforts for union when they affiliated with the Baptists. In the statement on which they were received they reiterated the position of the *Declaration and Address* and declared it was their intention to preach union on the basis of the New Testament.

2. Many Baptists influenced—

Alexander Campbell was a man of unusual ability. He had a keen, well-trained mind and possessed remarkable powers of leadership. He was familiar with church history and the Bible was his constant companion. After his marriage to Miss Margaret Brown her father deeded him a farm which gave him an independency which enabled him to preach

without compensation. Inasmuch as he was not tied to any particular congregation he was able to travel among the Baptist churches. Being a man of unusual ability he was cordially received by the people, and wherever he went he proclaimed his views of the church and made converts to his position.

Alexander Campbell won much favor with the Baptists through his debate with a Presbyterian minister by the name of John Walker. A personal controversy had developed between John Walker, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Mount Pleasant, Ohio, and John Birch who was pastor of the Baptist Church. This led to a challenge by Mr. Walker to Mr. Birch or any other Baptist preacher whom he might select to debate the subject of baptism. Mr. Birch accepted the challenge and sought to prevail upon Mr. Campbell to undertake the discussion. In the third letter in which he urged this he said, "I can truly say it is the unanimous wish of all the church to which I belong that you should be the disputant." This is an indication of the estimate which the Baptists had of Mr. Campbell's ability.

Mr. Campbell was regarded as the victor in this debate which was held June 19 and 20, 1820. The Baptists were proud of the victory, yet many of them "remained extremely dubious in regard to the orthodoxy of their champion." Inasmuch as the debate was published and given wide circulation it

made many friends for Mr. Campbell. At the close of the debate he issued a challenge to any Pedobaptist minister to debate the subject of infant baptism. The challenge was accepted about three years later by a Presbyterian minister of Kentucky by the name of Maccalla. This debate was held in October, 1823, in Washington, Kentucky. In this debate which lasted seven days Mr. Campbell made some advancement in the position taken in the debate with Mr. Walker.

As a result of this debate his popularity was increased. He was urged to make a tour of the Baptist churches of Kentucky. He did visit some of the churches, and wherever he went he was greeted by sympathetic crowds. He brought to the debate at Washington the first copies of the *Christian Baptist* which were eagerly read. The debate and his tour of the churches increased the circulation and influence of the *Christian Baptist*.

Alexander Campbell's plea for reform met with a hearty response in many Baptist churches. His influence in Kentucky is indicated by the following extract from the minutes of the Baptist Missionary Association of Kentucky, held in Fayette County, September 11, 1824. After announcing the regular meeting the following statement is made, "It is proposed also to have a meeting of all the Baptist preachers who can attend on Friday, the day preceding the meeting of the association, at eleven

o'clock, A.M. at the same place, for the purpose of a general conference on the state of religion, and on the subject of reform. All the ministers of the gospel in the Baptist denomination favorable to these objects are invited to attend, and, in the spirit of Christian love, by mutual counsel, influence, and exertion, according to the gospel, to aid in advancing the cause of piety in our state.

“It is obvious to the most superficial observer, who is at all acquainted with the state of Christianity and of the church of the New Testament, that much, very much is wanting, to bring the Christianity and the church of the present day up to that standard. In what this deficiency consists, and how it is to be remedied, or whether it can be remedied at all, are the points to be discovered and determined.” Alexander Campbell quoted this extract with hearty approval as the introduction to his long series of articles in the *Christian Baptist* on “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things.”

3. Opposed by the Baptists—

A small minority consisting of Elder Pritchard, Elder Brownfield, and Elder Stone and his son opposed the admission of the Brush Run Church to the Redstone Association. The members of this church did not agree with the Baptists on many points, but the main objection to them was their refusal to adopt the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. Many Baptist preachers soon became suspicious that Alex-

ander Campbell was not in harmony with Baptist doctrine. That suspicion gradually developed into opposition. The Redstone Association met in 1816 with the Cross Creek Church which was ministered to by Elder Pritchard, who had opposed the reception of the Brush Run Church. Mr. Pritchard had opposed Mr. Campbell having a place on the program, but, on account of the sudden illness of Elder Stone, Mr. Campbell was selected to preach one of the sermons. He preached his famous "Sermon on the Law" which was the occasion of bitter opposition by many Baptists. Mr. Campbell wrote in the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1848 that during the delivery of the sermon "an overzealous elder called a council of the preachers and proposed to have me forthwith condemned before the people by a formal declaration from the stand—repudiating my discourse as not Baptist doctrine." That overzealous elder was undoubtedly Elder Pritchard.

The growing opposition even at this early date is indicated by the fact that at this meeting in 1816 Thomas Campbell brought a letter from a church of immersed believers in Pittsburg, whence he had moved, requesting membership, and it was noted "that as this letter is not presented according to the constitution of this Association, the request cannot be granted."

The opposition occasioned by the "Sermon on the Law" increased. A scheme was finally devised to

exclude him from the Association in 1823. A rule for the reception of new congregations was adopted which provided that the congregations which had been constitutionally admitted should continue as members. When Alexander Campbell realized that this was intended to exclude the Brush Run Church and thus eliminate him from the Association, he proposed that letters of dismissal should be granted to him and others by the Brush Run Church to establish a church at Wellsburg. The newly-constituted church was received into the Mahoning Association in Ohio. In the statement of faith on which this church was received the authority of the New Testament for the church is strongly maintained.

As the years passed Alexander Campbell's position on reform took definite shape. His conception of the church became formulated in his own thinking, and through his preaching and his writings in the *Christian Baptist* these views became known to others. In the *Christian Baptist* he fearlessly criticized practices in the Baptist Church which he thought did not conform to New Testament teaching. In the series of articles on "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things" he presented his conception of the New Testament church and urged that the Baptist Church and all others should conform to this.

Mr. Campbell won many followers, not only among the laymen, but among the ministers as well. These

ministers proclaimed these views in their churches and made other followers, but they also made bitter enemies. As early as 1826 religious editors began to designate the followers of Mr. Campbell as "Restorationers," or "Campbellites." A letter from Spencer Clack of Kentucky which was published in the *Christian Baptist* (V.12.82) reveals the situation which prevailed in many sections, "Some are for you, others against you; some approve, others censure and condemn; such is the state of affairs; and the effect produced by your writing. But let me ask, What is the great good which such divisions will achieve?"

4. Baptists withdraw fellowship—

The opposition to Alexander Campbell and his associates became very bitter in some sections before 1825. Local churches were divided. The church at Nelson, Ohio, was the first to take action. There was a division in this church in 1824 when one part accepted the "Articles of Faith" while the others declared they adhered to the Bible alone. The statement was made in the *Christian Baptist* near the close of 1825 that "several Baptist congregations in the western part of Pennsylvania and in the state of Ohio have voted the Philadelphia Confession of Faith out of doors." Through the influence of Walter Scott as evangelist all the Baptist churches of the Mahoning Association accepted Mr. Camp-

bell's program of reform. The Stillwater Association of Ohio abandoned its creed and constitution and declared for the Bible alone. Several of the Associations of Kentucky were largely dominated by the Reformers during 1828 and '29.

Alexander Campbell was anxious to continue his activities for union through the Baptist Church. He wrote in the *Christian Baptist* of January 17, 1826, as follows, "I have no faith in the divine right of associations, yet to shield me from such far-off and underhand attacks, as well as other important purposes, that I may be under the inspection and subject to merited apprehension, I and the church with which I am connected are in full communion with the Mahoning Baptist Association of Ohio; and through them with the whole Baptist society in the United States; and I do intend to continue in connection with this people so long as they will permit me to say what I believe, to teach what I am assured of and to censure what is amiss in their views and practices. I have no idea of adding to the catalogue of new sects. This game has been played too long."

Things developed so rapidly from 1828 to 1830 that a break was inevitable. Loyal Baptists realized that their church was being honey-combed by this movement for reform. Not only were churches and associations being divided, but it was evident that whole churches and associations were being lost to the Baptists. The Reformers were content to remain

with the Baptists, but the Baptists were anxious to get rid of them.

Separation in local churches continued to take place in increasing numbers from 1824 and there was bitter controversy in the association meetings. The first association to take definite action against the Reformers was the Redstone in 1825. It was, however, the action of the Beaver Association of Pennsylvania in 1829 which led to a general movement among the Baptists to withdraw fellowship from the Reformers. This Association passed a series of resolutions condemning the errors of Mr. Campbell and his followers. They condemned the eight following errors:

“1. They, the Reformers, maintain that there is no promise of salvation without baptism.

“2. That baptism should be administered to all who say they believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, without examination on any other point.

“3. That there is no direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the mind prior to baptism.

“4. That baptism procures the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

“5. That the Scriptures are the only evidence of interest in Christ.

“6. That obedience places it in God's power to elect to salvation.

“7. That no creed is necessary for the church but the Scriptures as they stand. And

“8. That all baptized persons have the right to administer the ordinance of baptism.”

These resolutions were copied in the Baptist papers throughout the country, and churches and associations were warned against the errors of this dangerous element in the church. A minority of the churches of the North District Association in Kentucky withdrew from the rest, taking with them the constitution and the name. Six of the thirteen churches of the Boone's Creek Association of Kentucky were dropped. The Tate's Creek Association of Kentucky at its meeting in June, 1830, excluded the followers of Mr. Campbell. It added the four following errors to the eight against which the Beaver Association protested:

“1. That there is no special call to the ministry.

“2. That the law given by Moses is abolished.

“3. That experimental religion is enthusiasm, And

“4. That there is no mystery in the Scriptures.”

The movement for separation spread so that by the close of 1830 the Baptists had quite generally separated themselves from the Reformers. As the reform ideas continued to spread in the Baptist churches those who accepted them were excluded.

5. Reformers seek co-operation—

By 1830 Mr. Campbell realized that it would be impossible for those who desired reform to continue in fellowship with the Baptists. In July of that year

he discontinued the publication of the *Christian Baptist*, because its name had a sectarian suggestion, and he began the publication of the *Millennial Harbinger* which was about twice the size of the former magazine. The *Millennial Harbinger* was to be the herald of the new movement which had now become a separate communion.

There was no organization uniting those who accepted the program of the Campbells. They were bound together by their common faith and purpose. Their aim was to unite the forces of God, and they believed the only way this could be done was by restoring the apostolic church. They believed they had done this, hence they urged others to come and stand with them.

The Reformers, or, as they came to be known "Disciples," felt the need of fellowship meetings to give them unity of purpose. In 1829 a three-days' meeting of the Reformers was held at Mount Zion, in Clark County, Kentucky, for social worship and exhortation. In 1830 similar meetings were held at Clear Creek and Mayslick, Kentucky. This latter meeting was attended by Alexander Campbell, and there were present the advocates of the ancient order of things "from several counties of Kentucky."

The action of the Mahoning Association with which Alexander Campbell had membership was an

important factor in giving direction to this movement which had been excluded from the Baptist Church. Walter Scott who was a strong advocate of the program for union was appointed evangelist of the Mahoning Association in 1827. He preached throughout the district and converted preachers and churches to his views. The result was that when the Baptists were excluding those who accepted the program for reform the Mahoning Association was united for the movement. At the meeting in 1830 it was disbanded as an "Association" and was transformed into a "Yearly Meeting." This became a model for the others and the yearly meeting was the unifying force among the churches, and it was from this that the general organization later developed.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Show how the desire for union guided the Campbells and their associates.
2. Show how Alexander Campbell influenced the Baptists.
3. Discuss the opposition to Mr. Campbell and his followers in the ranks of the Baptists.
4. Show how the Baptists withdrew from the Campbells and their followers leaving them a distinct communion.
5. Discuss the first movement toward organization on the part of the Disciples.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is a fixed program for union desirable?
2. Were the Campbells and their associates justified in remaining with the Baptists when they were not in harmony with their teaching?
3. Is a communion justified in withdrawing fellowship from those who are not in harmony with its teachings?
4. Is good accomplished through religious debates?
5. Are the Disciples a denomination?

Chapter VI

Inheritance from Other Communions

The Disciples did not originate independently of other communions. Their early leaders came out of the other churches and brought many of their inherited ideas with them. Their aim was to restore the New Testament church, but they were guided in their study of the New Testament by the training which they had formerly received. The pioneer Disciples made their protest against those things in the denominations which they thought were not in harmony with the Scriptures, but they brought over into the new movement many of the strongest features of those churches with which they were familiar. This new movement which developed out of the life of America had as its basis many of the elements which gave strength to the other communions. These were woven into a system by men who had a passion for union; by men who, in their effort to find a common basis, were led to make a careful study of the New Testament. These men became convinced that Christians could find a common ground if they went back of all creeds and councils to the apostolic church. In their search for the New Testament church they were guided by their inheritance from other communions. What did

not seem to be in opposition to the New Testament was retained; what they thought was contrary to New Testament teaching was rejected.

The Disciples should be familiar with their relation to other communions in order that they may properly evaluate their religious ancestry. Those who desire union should be acquainted with the effort of the pioneer Disciples to find the apostolic church by a study of the New Testament, guided by their inheritance from other communions. This should throw some light on our task today to find a basis of union for the divided church.

1. Contribution of Presbyterians—

The four outstanding leaders of the Disciples came out of the Presbyterian Church. Thomas Campbell was educated in a Presbyterian seminary and was the pastor of a Presbyterian church. He loved this church, and, when he left it, it was because he felt the leaders were untrue to Presbyterian ideals. Alexander Campbell was trained in a Presbyterian home, and the doctrines of the church were so impressed on his mind that he never got away from them. Walter Scott was brought up as a Presbyterian. He was graduated from Edinburgh University where he was under Presbyterian influence. Barton W. Stone was also a Presbyterian minister and was familiar with Presbyterian doctrine.

Although these men broke with the Presbyterians

and were sometimes very bitter in their criticisms of the mother church, yet it is undoubtedly true that it is to the Presbyterians that the Disciples are indebted for much of their doctrine. Every Presbyterian child committed the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and the leaders were familiar with the Westminster Confession of Faith. While the Disciples rejected much of the teaching of these documents, they contain not only the fundamental doctrines which the Disciples held in common with others, but they also furnish the main elements for much of the teaching on which the Disciples have placed peculiar emphasis.

The slogan, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak," is a restatement of the answer to the second question of the Catechism. The question, "What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him," is answered thus: "The word of God, which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him." This statement concerning the rule of faith was somewhat elaborated in the Appendix to the *Declaration and Address*; "We dare therefore neither do, nor receive anything, as of divine obligation, for which there cannot be especially produced a 'thus saith the Lord' either in express terms, or by approved precedent." The same thought is expressed in the sixth section of the first chapter of the Confession of Faith: "The

whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture."

The Disciples placed much stress on the adequacy of the Scriptures as man's guide, and they stressed the fact that the way is made so plain that none need miss it. The same thought is emphasized in the seventh section of the first chapter of the Confession of Faith: "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them."

The Disciples stressed the fact that Scriptures must be interpreted by other Scripture. They were merely restating the ninth section of the first chapter of the Confession of Faith which reads, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly."

The Disciples in their preaching stressed the fact

that sin is a transgression of the Law of God, and, in order that man can be saved, he must obey God's revealed will. This conception is plainly stated in the Shorter Catechism. The answer to question 14 is, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." According to the answer to question 39, "the duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will."

The threefold office of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, which was so much emphasized in the preaching of the pioneer Disciples, is fully discussed in the answers to the questions from 23 to 26.

The importance of faith, repentance and baptism as divine requirements of those who would turn from sin to God is made emphatic in the answers to the questions from 85 to 95. These are discussed in the Catechism, in the same order that the Disciples have emphasized them. The answer to question 85 is, "To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicated to us the benefits of redemption." It is plain from the answers to the questions that follow that one of these outward means is baptism, and, according to the answer to question 95, "baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him."

The Disciples placed much emphasis on the importance of the word in conversion. They insisted that the Spirit operates through the word. This position is stated in the answer to question 89. The question, "How is the word made effectual to salvation?" is answered thus, "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation."

The Disciples should have great respect for the Presbyterians, for they received a great spiritual inheritance from this denomination. They rejected much that is taught in the Confession of Faith and the Catechism, but it was the teachings of these documents that furnished the basis for their faith.

2. Contribution of Independents—

While the Presbyterians were the most determining factor in the doctrine of the Disciples, the Independents, or Congregationalists, influenced them most in their organization and worship. As previously indicated, Thomas Campbell had come in contact with the Independents at Rich Hill, and Alexander had been so much influenced by Ewing and the Haldanes while in Glasgow University that he said his "faith in creeds and confessions of human device was considerably shaken while in Scotland."

As the term would indicate, the Independent churches of Scotland emphasized the independence of the local congregation. Alexander Campbell reflected this influence when, in the sermon in which he replied to the action of the Synod of Pittsburg six months before the Brush Run Church was organized, he said, "We believe that the church of Christ is completely independent beneath the government of her glorious Head, expressly declared in the rules and ordinances of his appointment."

The Haldanes taught that a man's right to preach is based "upon the indispensable duty of every Christian to warn Christians to flee from the wrath to come," hence they employed schoolmasters and others as itinerant preachers. Alexander Campbell preached without having been formally ordained to the ministry, and that was one of the objections which the Synod of Pittsburg made to the Christian Association of Washington. Although he was not ordained until 1812, he says he preached one hundred and six sermons during the year 1810. The Disciples from the start did not require formal ordination to the ministry, although they did ordain as a matter of good form.

The Independents of Scotland, who were followers of the Haldanes, observed the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, and it is significant that the Brush Run Church observed the ordinance the next day after the organization, and the weekly observ-

ance was a characteristic of the Disciples from the beginning. Although the Haldanes continued to make baptism a matter of forbearance, they not only refused to baptize children but both brothers were immersed shortly before Alexander Campbell went to Glasgow. This influence of the Haldanes on Alexander Campbell may have guided him somewhat at a later time when he came to settle the question of baptism.

When the practical questions concerning church government came up for discussion and decision, the Campbells went to the Scriptures for the solution. Their desire was to find what the New Testament had to say on the question, but they were undoubtedly influenced in their interpretations by the teaching of the Independents. The Disciples should have a friendly feeling for the Congregationalists, for they received much from the Congregationalists of Scotland.

3. Contribution of Baptists—

Although the movement which developed into the Christian Church had organic connection with the Baptists for a number of years, the Disciples were not as much influenced by them as one would expect. There were perhaps more differences between the Reformers and the Baptists in 1830 when they separated than there had been in 1813 when they became affiliated. The thinking of this little group had be-

come so fixed during the four years between the issuing of the *Declaration and Address* and the union with the Baptists that they continued to hold and teach them. In the statement upon which they had been received into the Association they had declared that they would teach and preach the New Testament truths as they understood them. Bitter controversy waged during much of that time and the development was away from the Baptists rather than towards them. In the charges brought against the Campbells and their followers they were accused of rejecting most of the things for which the Baptists stood. As always happens in controversy, the differences between the Reformers and the Baptists were magnified and there was much more in common than they supposed.

The Disciples were in agreement with the Baptists on two important points in connection with baptism. They taught that only believers were proper subjects for baptism and that baptism should be by immersion. Alexander Campbell virtually disclaimed any influence from the Baptists in reaching his conclusions on the subject of baptism. In his *Address to the Public*, published in the *Christian Baptist* in 1824, he said, "I was led to question the claims of infant sprinkling to divine authority, and was, after a long, serious and prayerful examination of all means of information, led to solicit immersion on a profession of my faith, when as yet I scarce

knew a Baptist from Washington to the Ohio." What he was stressing in this connection was that when he was immersed he had no thought of uniting with the Baptists for he did not know any of them. It seems almost certain that there was an unconscious influence from the Baptists. More than a year before his baptism, when on a preaching tour, Alexander Campbell and a Baptist preacher spent the night together. They spent much time discussing baptism, and, as Alexander Campbell took the side of the Pedobaptists, he was helpless in the discussion. Perhaps this experience had more influence than he thought in helping him to think his way through the problem. When he made up his mind legislation, but they were suggested by the associations which the Disciples had been attending.

It was their fellowship with the Baptists that led the Disciples to accept the plan of the Association as the basis of fellowship between churches. Mr. Campbell in the *Christian Baptist* condemned the Associations for assuming to themselves legislative power, but he believed in them as fellowship meetings. When the Mahoning Association was dissolved in 1830 by unanimous vote Mr. Campbell arose and said, "Brethren, what now are you going to do? Are you never going to meet again?" Many who were present had come many miles to attend this meeting, and, following the suggestion of Mr. Campbell, it was decided that "all the churches should

meet on the Friday preceding the last Lord's Day in August next in New Lisbon." These yearly meetings spread to other parts of the country and became a characteristic feature of the Disciples. They were mass meetings rather than delegated assemblies, and they were for worship and inspiration rather than legislation, but they were suggested by the associations which the Disciples had been attending.

The Disciples owe much to the Baptists because it was the freedom of that communion that gave them shelter when they were cut off from others. It was because of that freedom that they were able to carry on their work of reform until there was a large constituency whose purpose was the restoration of the ancient order of things. When these Reformers were excluded by the Baptists they went forth as banished children, but they bore the stamp of the mother upon them.

It would not be correct to call the churches of the Disciples an eclectic system which was made up from elements from other communions. It was a movement guided by leaders who had a wonderful insight into the Scriptures and a passion for union on the New Testament basis. In formulating the program which they were to present to the world they took over important elements from the three communions with which they were connected. From the Presbyterians they received their fundamental doctrines. From the Independents they received

their conception of the organization and worship of the church. From the Baptists they received their passion for liberty and the general plan for future organization. The Disciples have always been free to take over from other communions and that should put them in a position of leadership in working out the program for union.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Which of the early Disciple leaders had Presbyterian training?
2. What were some of the doctrines the Disciples inherited from the Presbyterians?
3. How did the Disciple leaders come under the influence of the Independents?
4. What did the Disciples receive from the Independents?
5. How were the Disciples influenced by the Baptists?

Questions for Discussion

1. How do the various communions influence each other now?
2. What communions are most like the Disciples?
3. Would it be desirable to have all Christians become like the Disciples?
4. What are some of the things in other communions you would want preserved?
5. To what extent are we justified in taking over what we think is good in other communions?

Chapter VII

Receiving the Stone Movement

Very soon after the Disciples became a distinct communion they were able to make a practical demonstration of their program for union. In 1832 a movement was begun to unite the followers of Barton W. Stone with the Disciples. The success of this effort demonstrated the practicability of the plea which the Disciples had been making.

The Disciples owe more to Barton W. Stone than they have recognized. He was overshadowed by the Campbells and those who had been associated with them during the period when the controversy was being waged within the Baptist Church. As the years passed the Disciples almost forgot the part played by the pioneer from Kentucky whose labors for reform antedated the issuing of the *Declaration and Address* by five or six years. A careful study of the whole situation in our day is leading us to make a new appraisal of the labors of Barton W. Stone. We are coming to feel that he made a real contribution to the movement for union as it found expression in the communion that is designated as The Disciples of Christ.

1. Breaks with Presbyterians—

Like the Campbells, Barton W. Stone was brought up in the Presbyterian Church and was a preacher in that communion. His experience in seeking conversion had raised doubts in his mind on the subject of divine election. He was not satisfied with the Confession of Faith when he was ordained to the ministry in 1798. He had conferred with some of the leaders of the Presbytery about his difficulties, and, when he was asked at his ordination if he received the Confession, he replied that he did as far as he saw it was consistent with the word of God.

Stone's objection to the doctrine of total depravity and divine election became more pronounced as he continued in his preaching. A great revival was held at Cane Ridge in August, 1801. Thousands came from all the surrounding regions. The meeting lasted about a week and resulted in a large number of conversions. The strange phenomena that were manifest in this meeting passed away, but the preaching of Barton W. Stone and those who were associated with him marked a new departure. In his account of the beginning of the revival, Mr. Stone said, "On the universality of the gospel, and faith as the condition of salvation. I principally dwelt, and urged the sinner to believe now and be saved." The spirit of unity was prominent in this revival. In his autobiography Barton W. Stone said, "The Methodist and Baptist preachers aided in the

work, and all appeared cordially united in it—of one mind and one soul, and the salvation of sinners seemed to be the great object of all. We are engaged in singing the same songs of praise—all preached the same things—free salvation urged upon all by faith and repentance.”

There were four Presbyterian preachers besides Mr. Stone who had been preaching the same type of doctrine. They were Richard McNemar, John Thompson, John Dunlavy and Robert Marshall. David Purviance who was a candidate for the ministry held to the same faith. Mr. Stone in his autobiography said, “The distinguishing doctrine preached by us was that God loved the world—and sent his Son to save them, on condition that they believe in him; that the gospel was the means of salvation, but that this means would never be effectual to this end until believed and obeyed by us; that God required us to believe in his Son, and had given us sufficient evidence in his Word to produce faith in us, if attended to by us; that sinners were capable of understanding and believing this testimony, and of acting upon it by coming to the Savior and obeying him, obtaining salvation and the Holy Spirit.”

The Springfield Presbytery of Ohio took action against Richard McNemar for teaching doctrine that was contrary to the Confession of Faith. His case coming before the Synod of Lexington, Kentucky, involved the other four. The five men decided to

stand together, and, when it became evident that the decision of the Synod would be adverse to McNemar, the five men presented a protest against the proceedings of the Synod, and a declaration of their independence, and of their withdrawal from their jurisdiction, but not from the communion of the Presbyterian Church.

Although these five men were excommunicated, they still regarded themselves as Presbyterians, and they constituted themselves into the Springfield Presbytery. They published a document called "The Apology of Springfield Presbytery." Stone says, "In this book we stated our objections at length to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and against all authoritative confessions and creeds formed by fallible men. We expressed our total abandonment of all authoritative creeds but the Bible alone as the only rule of faith and practice."

Under the name of the Springfield Presbytery they went forth preaching the gospel as they understood it. They were bitterly opposed by the Presbyterians, but they made many friends. After about a year they decided to disband as a presbytery, inasmuch as that "savored of a party spirit," and to take simply the name "Christian." As a statement of their action they published "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," June 28, 1804. This was signed by six preachers, the five already mentioned, and David Purviance. It was

intended as a somewhat humorous statement, but the position taken in the document was strikingly like that announced five years later in the *Declaration and Address*. In the twelve items of the document were enumerated the things for which they stood. They condemned the sectarian spirit and expressed a desire to be a part of the one body of Christ. In order that they might help to bring about the condition which they desired they disclaimed all party names and distinctions. They condemned ecclesiastical lawmaking bodies and insisted on the right of the individual to have "free course to the Bible." They maintained that the government of the church is internal and that each particular church has the right to manage its own affairs. They asserted that the Bible is our "only sure guide to heaven."

2. An independent movement—

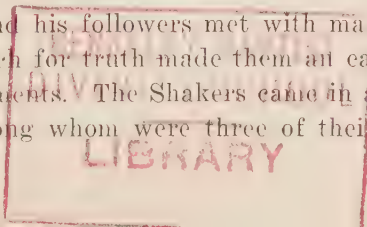
The Presbyterians disowned Barton W. Stone and his associates after 1803, although they claimed connection through the Springfield Presbytery until it was disbanded. In June, 1804, they went forth as an independent movement, wearing only the name Christian. Unlike Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone had to struggle against poverty. Having freed his slaves, he had to cultivate his own little farm, and he had little time left for study or travel among the churches.

These men had to feel their way, and they were

sometimes very much perplexed. In 1804 Mr. Stone became troubled about the atonement. He published his views in a pamphlet, and these were bitterly denounced. He was accused of being a Unitarian.

Shortly after Mr. Stone and those who were associated with him had launched the independent movement they became interested in the subject of baptism. According to Mr. Stone's own statement, he was led to accept "believer's immersion" in 1804 and he ceased entirely to practice "pedobaptism." Other things absorbed their interest for a time, but in 1807 the baptismal question became critical. The group came together to discuss the subject, for they had formerly agreed "not to venture on anything new without advice from one another." They decided "that every brother and sister should act freely and according to their conviction of right, and that we should cultivate the long neglected grace of forbearance towards each other—they who should be immersed should not despise those who were not, and vice versa." Mr. Stone and most of the members of his congregation were immersed, and they began to place much stress, not only on the form of baptism, but also on its importance in connection with salvation.

Stone and his followers met with many reverses. Their search for truth made them an easy prey for new movements. The Shakers came in and enlisted many, among whom were three of their preachers.



This influenced many to go back to the established churches. Robert Marshall, John Thompson and Barton W. Stone were the only ones left of those who had come out from the Presbyterians in 1804, and Marshall and Thompson were becoming dissatisfied. They insisted that "the Bible was too latitudinarian for a creed—that there was a necessity, at this time, to embody a few fundamental truths, and to make a permanent and final stand upon them." A meeting was held at Mount Tabor, near Lexington, to consider their demand. Their scheme was "almost universally opposed by a large conference of preachers and people." Shortly after this Marshall and Thompson went back to the Presbyterians, and Stone was the only one of the original group that remained true to the vision.

A conference of the various independent congregations met with the Bethel Church August 8, 1810, to discuss differences of opinion and plans for the future. The following agreement was adopted, "At a general meeting of ministers of the Christian Church at Bethel in the State of Kentucky, August 8, 1810, the brethren, taking into consideration their scattered, local situation, their increasing numbers, and the difficulties arising in the execution of their office, agreed to unite themselves together formally taking the word of God as their only rule and standard for doctrine, discipline and government, and promising subjection to each other in the Lord, hav-

ing hereunto subscribed their names according to their present standing in said connection.”

The movement spread rapidly over Kentucky and Ohio. In 1826 Mr. Stone began the publication of *The Christian Messenger* whose mission was “to destroy sectarianism and sectarian props, creeds and names—to promote love, peace and unity among Christians—and to free the Bible from the rubbish of human traditions—and to restore to the world the unadulterated gospel of the kingdom.”

3. Union of Reformers and Christians—

Barton W. Stone met Alexander Campbell in Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1824, and they soon became very much interested in each other. They differed on some points, but they were seeking to accomplish the same thing and by very much the same method. They were laboring for the union of Christians on the basis of the New Testament.

A kindly feeling developed between the Reformers and Christians of Kentucky. The feeling became so cordial that Mr. Stone wrote as follows in 1831. “The question is going the round of society, and is often proposed to us, Why are not you and the Reformed Baptists one people? or, Why are you not united? We have uniformly answered, In spirit we are united, and that no reason exists on our side to prevent the union in form.”

After some conferences in Georgetown a more general meeting for the discussion of the merging of

the two movements was held in the Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky, January 1, 1832. Representatives of both groups were present. John Smith presented the cause of the Disciples, or Reformers, while Mr Stone spoke for the Christians. The meeting reached its climax when Stone and Smith, in front of the congregation, clasped hands and greeted each other as brethren. The members of the two bodies followed the example of the leaders, and pledged themselves to stand together for union, taking the Word of God as their only rule of faith and practice.

The fellowship which was manifested in this meeting does not mean that the Reformers and Christians were agreed on all points. When the Christians were asked if there were no differences between them and the Reformers, they gave the significant reply, "We are not concerned to know; we have never asked them what their opinions were, nor have they asked us. If they have opinions different from ours, they are welcome to have them, provided they do not endeavor to impose them on us as articles of faith, and they say the same of us." There were discussions between the leaders on some of the points of difference, and it was some time before the two churches in Lexington were actually united, but that meeting on January 1, 1832, was a declaration to the world that those who participated

in it intended to work together for the promotion of their common cause.

The outcome of this meeting in Lexington was not the union of the two bodies. Inasmuch as the local congregations of both the Christians and the Reformers were independent, neither one had the organization which would enable them to unite the bodies as such. Only those were united who had fellowship in that meeting, and some of them later lost interest in union because of devotion to their own party. The plan of procedure was to carry this spirit of union out to the churches. John Rogers, who was a member of the Christian body, and John Smith, who belonged to the Reformers, were appointed to go together among the churches of both parties to try to unite them.

There was much opposition among the Disciples as well as among the Christians. John Smith had great difficulty in convincing his friends among whom he had labored longest that the union was wise. They were afraid the position of the Disciples would be compromised by the teachings and practices of the Christians. The Christians were accused of being Unitarians, and many Disciples refused to fellowship them because of this reproach. The Disciples were accused of believing in baptismal regeneration, and many Christians refused to fellowship them because of that doctrine which they were supposed to hold.

The first congregations to be united were the two in Lexington. They later separated on account of differences and were not permanently united until 1835. Mr. Stone's position was that neither church was to be absorbed by the other, but both were to go together to do the Lord's work. When Mr. Stone moved to Jacksonville, Illinois, he found a Christian Church and a Reformed Church, but he refused to unite with either. He insisted that they should come together, and, when they did so, he took membership with the united church. The larger part of the Christian Churches of Kentucky and many from Ohio came into the union, but many in other states refused to unite and have remained a distinct body. Two other movements were merged with the one which was started by Barton W. Stone. One of these was led by James O'Kelley, a Methodist minister of Virginia. He and his followers withdrew in 1792, and in 1794 they took the name "Christian" only. The other movement was led by Abner Jones, a Baptist minister of Vermont. He launched an independent movement in 1800 for the abandonment of sectarian names and human creeds. A general conference of these three movements was held in 1819, and a general convention was organized in 1833. This communion is known today as the Christian Church (American Christian Convention), and has a membership of over a hundred thousand.

4. Influence of the Christians—

The Disciples received as a result of the union about eight thousand members of the Christian Church in Kentucky, and among these were many strong preachers besides Stone, such as John Rogers, Samuel Rogers, Thomas M. Allen, and John Allen Gano. Although the Disciples continued after the union very much the same as before, yet there were some permanent influences that came from the Christians.

The name "Christian" which was taken over by the Kentucky churches began to be looked upon with favor in other parts of the country. There was much newspaper discussion between Campbell and Stone over the name. Mr. Campbell insisted on the name "Disciple" to designate the followers of Jesus, and in his writings he sometimes used the capital "D." Notwithstanding the opposition of Mr. Campbell, the name "Christian" has remained as one of the designations of the church, and it has become more popular with the passing of years.

The evangelistic fervor of the Christians exerted a helpful influence on the Disciples. The Stone movement was born in one of the greatest revivals in the history of the American church. The Disciples had a tendency to be intellectual, and there was a warmth and fervor in the Stone movement which was needed.

The emphasis placed by Stone and his followers on the humanity of Jesus had a permanent influence on the Disciples. He placed so much stress on the humanity of Jesus that he was accused of being an Arian, and there was considerable newspaper discussion between him and Mr. Campbell on the subject. The discussion through the columns of the *Millennial Harbinger* was widely read, and it helped the Disciples to form a conception of Jesus in which the humanity plays a prominent part. He also stressed the love of God in the atonement, and this had an influence for good on the Disciples.

The Disciples came into existence through a desire for union. Their first great leader sought a union which would bind all denominations together. Out of his efforts a new church was born, and some of the communions of that day determined to a large extent the character of this church. As a result of its vigorous propaganda it received recruits from practically all denominations, and it was further influenced by these. Union must be comprehensive enough to embrace all the people of God, and this communion which is so cosmopolitan in its origin ought to be able to lead in this great task of the future.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Give an account of Barton W. Stone's break with the Presbyterians.

2. What were the important things set forth in The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery?

3. Discuss the progress of the Stone movement prior to 1832.

4. Discuss the union of the Reformers and Christians.

5. How were the Disciples influenced by Stone and his followers?

Questions for Discussion

1. Have the Disciples recognized the debt they owe to Barton W. Stone?

2. Why have not the Disciples had more interest in the places connected with the beginning of their history?

3. What value is there in a creed?

4. Why are the Campbells rather than Barton W. Stone regarded as the original leaders of the Disciples?

5. Why have the Disciples grown more rapidly than the Christian Connection people?

Chapter VIII

Fundamental Doctrines of the Formative Period

It is more difficult to state the doctrinal position of the Disciples than of many other communions, because they did not have a creedal statement in which that doctrine was formulated. It is possible, however, to set forth the fundamental ideas which were emphasized by the pioneer Disciple leaders. Although these doctrines were not formulated in a written creed, they were stated so frequently in publications and were proclaimed so uniformly from pulpits that they undoubtedly constituted the common body of doctrine of the church during the formative period. If any preacher or well-informed member of the church of this period had been asked the position of the Disciples, he would have stated some very definite doctrines. The purposes of this chapter is to make a brief analysis of the most important of these.

1. Opposed to theology—

The opposition of the pioneer Disciples to dogmatic theology, as it had been formulated in the creeds, made them hostile to theology itself. The emphasis on the New Testament tended to eliminate

doctrinal statements. "Bible names for Bible things" came to be a very familiar expression. In the chapter on "Purity of Speech" in the *Christian System* Alexander Campbell condemned the dogmatic theology which was prevalent in his day. He said, "We choose to speak of Bible things by Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not in the Bible, the idea which it represents is not there; and always confident that the things taught by God are better taught in the words and under the names which the Holy Spirit has chosen and appropriated than in the words which man's wisdom teaches."

Alexander Campbell insisted that the Bible is so plain that there is no room for man's theories. In his article on "Theology" in the third volume of the *Christian Baptist* he said, "I am always ready to show that he who preaches theory, orthodox or heterodox, preaches not the gospel of Jesus Christ. To this sentence I invite attention and challenge investigation."

The Disciples made a great contribution to the church when they abandoned theological terminology and used the simple language of the Scriptures. But while Alexander Campbell condemned the theological systems of others he felt free to work out his own system. This he did in a book which he called *The Christian System*. In this book the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith are discussed

from the biblical point of view. The first book was *Christianity Restored* which was published in 1835. This was rewritten and published in 1857 as *The Christian System*.

2. The Union of Christians—

The one doctrine which was most emphasized by the early Disciples was the union of Christians. Their course from the time they separated from the Presbyterians until they became a distinct communion was guided by their desire for union. The Christian Association of Washington was formed to promote union. Their fear of further division led them to seek fellowship with the Synod of Pittsburgh. It was the desire for union that led the Brush Run Church to affiliate with the Baptists in the Redstone Association. The goal led them on while they were affiliated with the Baptists, and they adopted a more definite method of reaching it. They insisted that the church could only be united by a restoration of the ancient order of things.

The Baptists withdrew from those who were pleading for union by a restoration of the New Testament church and these Reformers were left as a distinct communion. Their plan of procedure had been repeatedly modified, but their purpose remained the same as it had been announced in the *Declaration and Address*. Their aim was to bring about the union of the church on the basis of the New Testament.

Believing they had restored the ancient order of things, they invited others to unite with them.

The plea of the Disciples of that formative period can be stated in a few words. Sectarianism is a sin, hence all Christians should be united in one fellowship. This could be accomplished if all would accept the religion of Christ as it is set forth in the New Testament. This union is spiritual, and when all accept the doctrines and ordinances of the New Testament church and manifest its fruits, this union will be realized.

3. The New Testament the constitution of the church—

The early Disciples objected to formulated statements of faith, not because they are untrue, but because they divide. Alexander Campbell wrote as follows in 1853, "Our opposition to creeds arose from a conviction that, whether the opinions in them were true or false, they were hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity, and joy of Christians, and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ."

In the formative period much stress was placed on the fact that the New Testament was the constitution of the church. The statement is made in the *Declaration and Address* that the New Testament is a "perfect constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament church," and

also a "perfect rule for the particular duties of its members." It was this conception which impressed Alexander Campbell when he read the famous document of his father, and it held the central place in his thinking during the succeeding years. He wrote in 1839, "We take the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the foundation of all Christian union and communion."

This conception that the Bible is the constitution of the church and is to be read and understood by all exerted a tremendous influence on the Disciples. It made them a Bible people. The preachers became men of one book. They studied the Bible and their familiarity with it astonished the members of other churches. The lay members became Bible students. They carried their New Testaments with them and read as they had opportunity. As soon as one joined a church of the Disciples he began to read and mark his New Testament.

4. Christ the creed—

While the New Testament was emphasized as the constitution of the church and was in a measure regarded as the creed of the church, there was a tendency from the very beginning of the movement to stress Christ as the creed. That conception was in the mind of Thomas Campbell when he wrote the eighth proposition of the *Declaration and Address*. This proposition relates to the faith which is de-

manded of one who becomes a member of the church. He said, "As it is not necessary that persons should have a particular knowledge or distinct apprehension of all divinely revealed truths in order to entitle them to a place in the church; neither should they for this purpose, be required to make a profession more extensive than their knowledge: but on the contrary their having a due measure of scriptural self-knowledge respecting their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice; and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession of their faith in, and obedience to him, in all things according to his word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into his church." According to Thomas Campbell, what one needed to believe was that he was a sinner and could be saved through faith in Christ and in obedience to his will.

When Alexander Campbell arranged with Elder Luce for his baptism, it was agreed that he should be baptized on the simple confession that "Jesus is the Son of God." That was the only confession demanded of those who presented themselves for baptism during the succeeding years, and no further questions were asked concerning their faith when they were received into the church. As time passed the Disciples continued to emphasize the New Testament as the constitution of the church and to speak about Christ as the creed. Isaac Errett, who was a

prominent spokesman of the Disciples of the middle period, made the following statement in a tract, entitled *Our Position*, "With us, the divinity and Christhood of Jesus is more than a mere item of doctrine—it is the central truth of the Christian system, and in an important sense the creed of Christianity. It is the one fundamental truth which we are jealously careful to guard against all compromise. To persuade men to trust and love and obey a divine Savior, is the one great end for which we labor in preaching the gospel; assured that if men are right about Christ, Christ will bring them right about everything else. We, therefore, preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. We demand no other faith, in order to baptism and church membership, than the faith of the heart in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God; nor have we any term or bond of fellowship but faith in this divine Redeemer, and obedience to him. All who trust in the Son of God and obey him, are our brethren, however wrong they may be about everything else."

5. The church and the Kingdom of Heaven—

The Disciples interpreted Christianity in terms of the Kingdom of Heaven. The laws and regulations were given by God who entered into a covenant with man to confer certain blessings on condition that he keep these laws and regulations. Man's part of the covenant was to conform to these divine requirements.

The elements of the kingdom, as discussed in *The Christian System*, are the "Constitution, King, Subjects, Laws, and Territory." "The Lord Jesus Christ is the constitutional monarch of the Kingdom of Heaven." As king, he has the right to speak for God. The subjects of the kingdom are those who are born again. Having been adopted into the family of God, they have become joint heirs with Christ. The laws of the kingdom were promulgated by the apostles, for it was to them the Lord committed the management of his kingdom. The laws of the apostles were written down for the instruction of the churches, and we are to be governed by them. There is one universal law of naturalization into the kingdom, and that is the one proclaimed by Peter on Pentecost. The territory of the kingdom is the whole earth. The kingdom was established on Pentecost, when "God had made that Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ." The present administration of the Kingdom of Heaven is according to the direction of the apostles.

6. Definite steps in conversion—

Any statement of the doctrinal position of the Disciples of the formative period must give much prominence to their teaching on conversion. They not only taught that God's part in setting up the kingdom is so evident that there need be no doubt about it, but they also made it emphatic that man's part in becoming a citizen of the kingdom is made so

plain that he need not miss it. They taught that the requirements in conversion, or in becoming a citizen of the kingdom, are definite and fixed. They designated this process as the plan of salvation, or the scheme of redemption. In the ninth article on "Ancient Gospel," published in the *Christian Baptist* of 1828, the scheme is set forth as follows: "In the natural order of the evangelical economy, the items stand thus: (1) Faith; (2) Reformation; (3) Immersion; (4) Remission of sins; (5) Holy Spirit; and (6) Eternal Life."

Faith is the first step in the response of the individual to the divine claim. This faith, according to Alexander Campbell in *The Christian System*, is not identical with belief; it is rather the effect of belief. "Belief is the cause; and trust, confidence, or faith in Christ, the effect. Christian faith is belief in the testimony concerning Jesus as the Son of God and trust in him as Savior."

Repentance is the effect of faith, as faith is the effect of belief. True repentance includes three elements: sorrow for past sins; a resolution to forsake sin; and an actual reformation in life.

Baptism is demanded of the one who repents, and they taught that only immersion is baptism. They placed much emphasis on the fact that only penitent believers were proper subjects for baptism. Alexander Campbell makes the following statement in *The Christian System*, "Characters, not persons, as

such, are the subjects of baptism. Penitent believers—not infants nor adults, not males nor females, not Jews nor Greeks; but professors of repentance towards God, and faith in Christ—are the proper subjects of this ordinance.” The pioneer Disciples did not teach baptismal regeneration. They taught that without faith and repentance baptism has no merit whatever, but “to the believing penitent it is the means of receiving a formal, distinct, and specific absolution or release from guilt.”

“When man does that which is required of him, God fulfills his part of the covenant. Man receives a threefold blessing: the forgiveness of sins; the gift of the Holy Spirit; and adoption into the family of God.”

7. The church—

The Disciples placed much stress on the church. Inasmuch as the church is the body of Christ, it is necessary for one to be a member of it in order to be linked up to the Master. They held that the church had no right to refuse admission to one who had complied with the naturalization requirements. It had no right to vote on him; all it needed to know was that he had complied with the conditions of citizenship.

The rules for the regulation of churches are found in the letters written by apostles to particular congregations. For the management of its affairs a

church has elders and deacons who are elected and set apart by the whole community. The church has the right to legislate concerning the "mere circumstantial of the Christian institution," but "the faith, the worship, and the righteousness * * * are not legitimate subjects of human legislation, alteration, or arrangement." Each church is independent in the regulation of its affairs, and yet there must be co-operation between the local churches.

Baptism by immersion stood at the entrance into the church, while the Lord's Supper, as a memorial feast for Christians, was observed every first day of the week. The Disciples practiced close communion when they first separated from the Baptists, but they gradually became more tolerant in their attitude. Isaac Errett, in an article in the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1861, said it was his conviction that two-thirds of the Christian Churches in the United States practiced open communion, but he said, "those churches which were originally Baptist, are rather more unyielding."

8. The name—

The Disciples of the formative period placed much stress on the significance of the name. They insisted that party names not only divide, but they also express disloyalty to the Master. They protested against the term "Campbellite" being applied to them.

Those who accepted the program of the Campbells had been called "Reformers" before their separation from the Baptists, but when they became a distinct communion they were unwilling to accept that as the name by which they were to be designated. Many names were suggested, but "Disciple" and "Christian" became the more general.

Alexander Campbell favored "Disciple," or "Disciple of Christ," while Thomas Campbell and Barton W. Stone preferred the name "Christian." In an article in the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1839, Alexander Campbell said, "I will not contend with any man for a mere name, especially when they are all good."

While there was not uniformity in name, they were all agreed that human names were unworthy of the followers of Christ. They insisted that inasmuch as the church is the bride of Christ it should bear his name. They declared it was disloyalty to Christ for one of his followers to wear any other name but his.

These fundamental doctrines were stated so simply, so definitely, and so convincingly, that the Disciples had tremendous power in their preaching. Every preacher was certain to have a sermon on each doctrine discussed in this chapter, and preachers were judged by their ability in discussing these doctrines. The frequent discussion of these great themes so indoctrinated the laity that all Disciples

were able to give a reason for their faith. As a result of the simplicity and definiteness of their doctrine and the confidence with which they proclaimed it, the Disciples made a phenomenal growth during the first half-century of their existence as a separate people.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Why is it difficult to state the doctrinal position of the Disciples?
2. What was the attitude of the early Disciples towards theology?
3. What did the Disciples mean by Christ as their creed?
4. What was the teaching of the early Disciples on conversion?
5. What was the teaching of the early Disciples on baptism and the Lord's Supper?

Questions for Discussion

1. Is a definite system of doctrine desirable?
2. Is our creed Christ or the Bible?
3. Are the church and the Kingdom identical?
4. Should we preach "First Principles"?
5. Should we be designated by one definite name? If so, what should it be?

Chapter IX

Factors Determining the Character of the Disciples

A great movement does not come into existence suddenly; nor is it created by a few great personalities. Great movements spring out of the lives of the people. Those who lead are voices through which the age gives expression. These leaders do not arbitrarily plan the future course of the movement. They go forth following the leading of faith, and many times the course which they take is very different from the one they would have mapped out. The purpose of this chapter is to indicate some of the most important factors which helped to produce the Disciple movement and which helped to determine the course it took during the formative period.

1. The philosophy of John Locke—

Philosophy is an interpretation of life, and the thinking of John Locke was an important factor in the interpretation of life for the pioneers of the Disciple movement. Although Locke died a hundred years before the *Declaration and Address* was issued, his philosophy exerted a great influence on England at the beginning of the nineteenth century and was at that time even more powerful in America.

Alexander Campbell was interested in philosophical studies at an early age, and he was especially fond of Locke. Richardson, in his *Memoirs* (Vol. I, p. 33), says: "As he advanced in age, he learned greatly to admire the character and the works of Locke, whose 'Letters on Toleration' seem to have made a lasting impression upon him, and to have fixed his ideas of religious and civil liberty. The 'Essay on the Human Understanding' he appears to have thoroughly studied under the direction of his father." Alexander Campbell continued his studies in Locke, and his interest is indicated by the fact that in several issues of the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1844 he published lengthy extracts from his "Letters on Toleration."

There were important conceptions in the philosophy of Locke which undoubtedly influenced the pioneer Disciples in directing the movement to which they had committed their lives. It seems almost certain that this philosophy influenced them in working out the following conceptions:

a) *Authority derived from the people.*—Locke opposed the theory of the divine right of kings and maintained that political power can only be set up by a free contract, which contract rests on the will of the majority. When this principle is carried over into religion we have the interpretation of the church as given by the Disciples. The church as an

organization is based on contract. People enter it on their own initiative, and each local church manages its own affairs.

b) Right to revolt against an established church.—Locke held that, inasmuch as power comes from the people to the king, when the king is untrue to his trust, authority reverts to the people and revolution is justifiable. He taught that if the government became corrupt it was the duty of the subjects to overthrow it. This principle applied to religion justified the pioneers in leading a revolt against the Presbyterian church, and later against the Baptist church. It justified them in calling upon others to revolt against the authorities to which they had been submitting because they had departed from the true standards.

c) The restoration of the New Testament church.—Locke maintained that when governments go wrong the proper order can be established by going back to the beginning and restoring original conditions. The first king received his authority from the people, and, when he, or his descendants, misuse this power, the duty of the people is to start over again. When this principle is applied to religion it leads to the position of Alexander Campbell. He believed the churches had departed from the divine standard and it was his duty to lead a revolt against the established order. He maintained that there was only one way to remedy the ills of the church, and

that was to go back of creeds and councils and restore things as they were at the beginning.

d) The simplicity of religion.—Locke held that an elaborate system of doctrine is unnecessary. He demanded a Christianity that was so simple that it would be comprehensible to all. He suggested that the faith of the church, which is comprehended in one sentence—Jesus is the Messiah—is so simple that all can understand it. The Disciples insisted on the simplicity of the Christian religion. The declaration that Jesus Christ is the Son of God was the only confession of faith.

e) Tolerance for the sake of union.—Locke advocated the reduction of doctrinal requirements for membership in the church so that many different factions could be brought together in harmonious relations in one body. He believed union was possible, because “for the most part the matters of controversy and distinction between sects are no parts, or very inconsiderable ones and appendices, of true religion.”

The Disciples from the beginning have urged toleration for the sake of union. Thomas Campbell had tried to unite the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers while in Ireland. He had invited members of the different branches of the Presbyterian Church to participate in the fellowship of the Lord's Table. He called upon members of all churches to forget their differences and come together for the sake of

doing the Lord's work. When the Disciples had become a distinct communion, they placed much stress on toleration for the sake of union. When many of the followers of Stone united with the Disciples in 1832 there was no attempt to force uniformity of belief. Aylett Raines was received into the fellowship of the church although it was generally known that he held views that were much like Universalism. The Disciples have always had in their fellowship men and women who have had a great variety of opinions. One of their slogans has been, "In matters of opinion, liberty."

f) Intellectualism versus emotionalism and traditionalism.—Locke's system was fundamentally intellectual. He was opposed to emotionalism and traditionalism in the state and in the church as well. His aim was to get men to use their own minds, shake off the bondage of the past, and obtain liberty in rationality. He regarded religion as a statement of truth that made its appeal to the intellect. The revelation which was made was confirmed by miracle and was made so plain that all should accept it. In his writings Locke opposed the "idle acquiescence in traditional opinions and assumptions, which take the place of honest, intellectual effort and inquiry."

The pioneer Disciples gave Christianity a decidedly intellectual interpretation which was very similar to the conception of Locke. They believed the revelation was confirmed by miracle, hence there

could be no doubt concerning its validity. They believed this revelation made its appeal to the intellect and was so simple that all could comprehend it. Asserting their freedom from the blind traditionalism that had come down from the past, they maintained that the individual, by using his reason, could come directly to the revelation that has been made. They were as much opposed to emotionalism in religion as was Locke. They had so much to say against emotionalism and placed so much stress on knowledge and reason that their religious neighbors accused them of making religion a matter of the intellect alone.

There are other elements besides these in the teaching of the pioneer Disciples which have their counterpart in the philosophy of Locke. This philosophy undoubtedly influenced the early leaders in formulating their doctrine, and, because this philosophy was so generally accepted in America, their message met with a hearty response.

2. Political and social conditions of the Middle West—

The political and social conditions out of which a religious movement is born contribute much to the character of that movement. The Disciples of Christ is one of the very few religious bodies of American origin which has become strong, and it is significant that it had its beginning and reached its greatest strength in the Middle West, the section which has

perhaps contributed most to the democratic principles of our government. The religious movement which developed in this section inevitably partook of its characteristics, hence the Disciples can properly be designated as a truly American church.

The movement of the frontier line toward the West has been an important factor in the expansion of America. Sometimes that movement has been gradual; at other times it has been very abrupt. One of these migration waves swept over western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Northwest Territory in the last decade of the eighteenth century, and this was the section where the Disciples had their beginnings. At the close of the Revolution there were not more than fifty thousand people in all the territory of the United States west of the Alleghenies. Between 1790 and 1800 more than sixty thousand people poured into western Pennsylvania. In 1790 the population of Kentucky, Tennessee, and the whole Northwest Territory was only about one hundred thousand. During the next decade it had been increased to four hundred thousand. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the national government adopted a liberal policy regarding public lands. The result was that multitudes poured into the Northwest Territory, and it was settled as if by magic. Although the first settlement in Ohio was not made until 1788, the state was admitted to the union in 1803. In 1790 less

than six per cent of the population of the United States was west of the Alleghenies, but in 1820 the per cent had increased to thirty-two. There were some striking characteristics of this recently settled section where the Disciple movement took shape that helped to determine its nature.

a) Freedom from the domination of old bodies.—The Westerners were impatient of the restraints imposed on them by the East, both in matters of state and church. The governing bodies of all the denominations that had ecclesiastical control were east of the mountains. It was resentment of domination by the East that led the Cumberland Presbyterians to break away from the old body. This was a time of ecclesiastical revolts. The resentment of domination by the old bodies made it easy for the pioneer Disciples to assert their independence, and, because this feeling of resentment was common, their plea had ready acceptance.

b) Insistence on democracy in religion.—The spirit of democracy developed in the newer regions. The old sections east of the mountains were more or less under the control of the old ideals that had been brought over from Europe, but the pioneer life of the wilderness developed a pure democracy. Classes were forgotten and the equality of men was recognized. All the states that were admitted to the union after 1812, except Mississippi, removed all property qualifications, such as prevailed in the older states.

and accorded the right to vote to every adult white male. The constitutions of all these newer states were decidedly democratic.

Only a democratic church could make progress in these newer sections, and a church that took shape in this environment would be decidedly democratic. It was natural for the Campbells and their associates to resent the domination of the Presbytery. The control that was exercised by associations was not democratic enough for the Disciples. They insisted on the independence of each local congregation with fellowship in annual meetings for preaching and reports on the progress of the work. Because the Disciples have been so decidedly democratic they have always been successful in the newer communities.

c) A poorly paid ministry.—The people of the Middle West were in moderate circumstances. The farms were small because the methods of agriculture were primitive. The people lived in humble homes, raised their own produce, made their own clothing, and had very little ready money. This environment out of which the church developed exerted an influence on the character of its ministry for many years.

The adherents to the cause of the Disciples were not generally the wealthier people of the community. The churches were small and the people were poor and they were not able to pay much for preaching. Most of the Disciple preachers of those early days

received very little financial support. Alexander Campbell managed a farm from which he received his living, and many of the other preachers followed his example.

Because the Disciple ministers were preaching for almost nothing, while the pastors of the churches of other communions were receiving fixed salaries, they had a tendency to criticize a paid ministry. Some of the most bitter articles in the *Christian Baptist* are against the paid clergy. This criticism so reacted on the churches that those that were able to support preachers were unwilling to do so. The result was that the Disciples had an underpaid ministry which resulted in many preachers having other interests in addition to preaching.

d) *A ministry with meager education.*—The fact that it was necessary for the early Disciple ministers to have some other interest, which was usually farming, to insure a livelihood, exerted a permanent influence on the educational character of the Disciple ministry. The first leaders who came from the Presbyterians were well educated, but most of the others of the early period had very meager education. They were men who studied the Bible and preached it with power, but they were lacking in general culture. They came from the farm and some of them were dressed in homespun when they delivered their messages. They carried their New Testament with them to the field, and many sermons were thought

out while the horses rested at the end of the furrow. Because there were so many of the Disciple ministers who had a meager education many of them had a tendency to boast that they had never been to college and that their knowledge was limited to the one book. Some of them even criticized a general education for ministers. Alexander Campbell came near doing this in some of his articles in the *Christian Baptist*, as, for example, "No. IV on The Clergy," written under date of January 5, 1824.

Because most of the preachers of the early days were self-supporting and were without college training, the churches did not demand an educated ministry. One who had a common school, or academy education, understood his Bible and was able to explain it, had all the qualifications that were necessary. The churches did not demand an educated ministry, and the preachers did not want college and seminary training. Even if they had desired a college education they could not have secured it, for the Disciples had no colleges, and theological seminaries were condemned. It is doubtful whether early Disciples would have considered sending their sons who were thinking about the ministry to colleges conducted by other communions.

In a short time after the Disciples became a distinct communion Alexander Campbell and other leaders began to feel the need of a better educated ministry. Bacon College was started in 1836, and

Bethany College was opened in 1840. Other colleges were started in other sections. These colleges did much to change the situation, but it has been difficult to overcome the influence of the formative period. The Disciples have not had proper interest in their educational institutions, and the meager support which these colleges have received has been a reproach to the church.

f) A country people.—The situation just described made the Disciples a country people. The preachers, because of their meager education, preferred the country and the smaller towns. Total or partial self-support was not adapted to city conditions. It was perfectly natural that the Disciple ministers should join the throng of settlers who pushed on farther west rather than go to the East where the cities had been founded. After a century of history the Disciples have very little strength east of the place where the movement started.

For a long time the Disciples made their progress in the rural sections and smaller towns of the Middle West. When they did enter the cities, they maintained their country ways and methods. It was only recently that they began to adapt their program to city conditions. Their places of worship were plain, wooden, rectangular buildings located on side streets. They were simply furnished and the worship was without ritual. The singing was without the use of an instrument.

Inasmuch as a large proportion of the people of the Middle West during the early days of the Disciple movement lived in the country or smaller towns, their country ways and program were popular and won adherents. But the fact that they were so slow in adapting themselves to city conditions greatly retarded their influence in the cities, even in those sections where they had their greatest strength.

3. The influence of opposition—

The Disciple movement was born in controversy and that left a permanent influence on the church. There was first the controversy with the Presbyterians which led to their withdrawal from that church. Then there was the controversy with the regular Baptists which led to the separation from them. After they became a distinct communion there was controversy with any whom they thought were not trying to restore the New Testament church.

The public debates of the Disciples and the controversial character of their journalism had a permanent effect on the church. Controversy developed clear and definite thinking, and the result was that this people which did not have a creedal statement soon had a body of beliefs which were very definitely formulated. This body of doctrine which was developed in controversy was passed on from one to the other.

Controversy led to the placing of undue emphasis on minor points. One does not make a full, impartial statement of truth when he is seeking to defeat an antagonist; his aim is to prove his point. A person does not properly evaluate the position of one with whom he does not agree if he is in a controversy with him. The Disciples, because of the debating spirit, at times have had a tendency to emphasize the thing that should be subordinate at the expense of the thing that is fundamental.

Controversy has a tendency to detract from the spirituality of religion and develop the legalistic phase. Debate tends to make religion a matter of the head rather than of the heart. In debate emphasis is placed on conformity to the letter rather than to the spirit. Debate brought some advantage to the Disciples, but it inevitably detracted from spirituality. It was not during the period of public debates that the Disciples were the most spiritual. The newspaper controversies have not been a source of spiritual power. As a rule, those who have been masters in controversy have not been leaders in spirituality.

Controversy has sometimes created a spirit of unkindness and a lack of Christian charity. Debates frequently threw neighborhoods into confusion and destroyed the very unity which they were intended to further. Newspaper controversy has frequently engendered bitterness and produced fac-

tions in the church. There has scarcely been a time in the whole history of the church when some controversy was not being waged, and that is partly due to the controversial spirit of the early days. At first the controversy was waged with the members of other communions, but during recent years it has been between different groups of Disciples. Because of this controversial spirit within the church much bitterness has prevailed and the work has been much retarded.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Show how the philosophy of John Locke influenced the teaching of the Disciples.

2. How did the political and social environment of the early Disciples help to produce a democratic church?

3. How did the social environment of the Disciples affect the character of their ministry?

4. Why were the Disciples in the early part of their history largely a country people?

5. How did opposition influence the Disciples of the early period?

Questions for Discussion

1. Why does philosophy influence religious interpretation?

2. Does a change in philosophy make the interpretation of the pioneers ineffective in our day?

3. Is a better educated and better paid ministry an advantage or a disadvantage?

4. How has the interest of the Disciples in the country affected them in their work in the city?

5. Has the controversial spirit been helpful or injurious to the Disciples?

Chapter X

The Development of the Organization of the Church

A study of the development of the organization of the Disciples shows their ability to adapt themselves to changing conditions. The principle that the New Testament is a perfect constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the church, announced in the *Declaration and Address* and accepted as the guide of the movement, would seem to limit the church to the simple organization of the apostolic age. But such was not the case, for the church that was constituted by the pioneer Disciples began developing at once and has continued to develop until the present. It is a long way from the Brush Run Church to the United Christian Missionary Society.

There were some who maintained that the church should conform to the New Testament organization in every particular. This element opposed all co-operative organizations and finally withdrew from the progressive churches on the ground that they had departed from the faith. The discussion in this chapter relates to the main body of the church.

1. Protest against ecclesiasticism—

The Christian Association of Washington was not organized as a church. The management was entrusted to a committee of twenty-one members. The founding of the Brush Run Church May 4, 1811, marks the beginning of the organization of the Disciples. The officers consisted of elders and deacons, and that simple organization became the model for the local church in the Disciple movement. The Brush Run Church continued its organization after it had been received into the Redstone Association.

When Alexander Campbell began to plan for a restoration of the ancient order of things, he objected to organized societies in the church on the ground that they were not mentioned in the New Testament. He criticized these very sharply in the first article of the first issue of the *Christian Baptist* which was published August 3, 1823. Referring to the organization of the New Testament church, he said, "Their churches were not fractured into missionary societies, Bible societies, educational societies; nor did they dream of organizing such in the world. The head of a believing household was not in those days a president or manager of a board of foreign missions; his wife, the president of some female education society; his eldest son, the recording secretary of some domestic Bible society; his eldest daughter, the corresponding secretary of a mite society; his servant maid, the vice-president of

a rag society; and his little daughter, a tutoress of a Sunday school. They knew nothing of the hobbies of modern times. In their church capacity alone they moved. They neither transformed themselves into any other kind of association, nor did they fracture and sever themselves into divers societies. * * * They dare not transfer to a missionary society, or Bible society, or education society, a cent or a prayer, lest in so doing they should rob the church of its glory, and exalt the inventions of men above the wisdom of God. In their church capacity alone they moved." This statement was quoted against Mr. Campbell when he later saw the value of societies in the church.

At a very early date Alexander Campbell and his associates began to criticize the associations for assuming ecclesiastical authority. In the first volume of the *Christian Baptist* he said, "There is not the least intimation in any part of the New Testament of a representative government. Nothing is said about a number of church rulers being selected as an ecclesiastical council over a number of individual churches." In the fourth volume of the *Christian Baptist* he insisted that the local church is the highest authority and that no ecclesiastical body has the right to legislate for it. Those who go from the local church to the meeting of the association are messengers; they "carry intelligence to that meeting, and bear home intelligence from it." He in-

sisted that they are not properly representatives, or delegates, because they do not represent anybody and nothing has been delegated to them.

When the associations began to exclude churches and individuals, Alexander Campbell became more bitter in his condemnation of any authority above the local congregation. In an article in the sixth volume of the *Christian Baptist* he said, "I cannot give my voice in favor of appeals to any tribunal, but to the congregation of which the offender is a member; neither to a council of churches specially called, nor to an association. The old book, written by the apostles, has compelled me to hold this dogma fast." He closed this article with a striking bit of sarcasm in which he imagined an association of the churches of Macedonia excluding a man and then placing him under the stigma of all the associations of Greece.

Some of the followers of Mr. Campbell went even further than he did and questioned the right of associations to exist. The church at Randolph, Ohio, sent the following question to the meeting of the Mahoning Association in 1824, "Can associations in their present modifications find their model in the New Testament?" Other churches sent similar questions to the meetings of their associations. One who signed himself "A Lover of the Truth" wrote an article on "Baptist Associations" for the sixth volume of the *Christian Baptist* in which he complained

that "queries proposed with reference to the usefulness and scripturality" of associations have not been answered in the *Christian Baptist*. He then proceeded to show that they are without scriptural warrant.

This opposition to ecclesiastical control by associations could have but one inevitable result. At the meeting of the Mahoning Association at Austintown in 1830 it was unanimously agreed that the Association as an "ecclesiastical tribunal" exercising any supervision over particular congregations should never meet again. Inasmuch as Alexander Campbell was a member of this association this action became a guide for others, and it meant that the Disciples were not to have associations for the management of their affairs.

2. Development in co-operation—

After the Mahoning Association was dissolved it was decided to meet annually for preaching, for fellowship, and for hearing reports on the progress of the work. These yearly meetings were an important feature of the work of the Disciples during the 30's. They began on Friday and continued until Monday night. Reports were made, but the chief interest was in the preaching. They were attended by large crowds and they helped to give unity to the work.

At the first yearly meeting of the group which had constituted the Mahoning Association there was

much discussion about some plan of co-operation among the churches. According to Alexander Campbell's report in the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1831, "the most important item which occupied the attention of the meeting was a proposition to adopt some plan of co-operation among the churches in spreading the gospel. A committee was appointed to digest the outlines of a plan proposed in the meeting." It was decided to recommend to the consideration of the churches a plan of co-operation in the various counties. In these county meetings the churches were to be represented by messengers, the meetings were for worship, for making reports, and for devising means of preaching the word. It was specifically stated that these county meetings were to have nothing to do with any church business. Each county was to report at the general yearly meeting the progress that had been made.

There was objection to the introduction of business in the yearly meetings. The *Millennial Harbinger* of 1835 contains a letter from M. Winans to Mr. Campbell concerning the co-operation of the churches in Clinton and Green counties, Ohio. After mentioning the fact that messengers from the churches had met for the purpose of selecting one or more evangelists and arranging for their support, he said, "But I regret to add that some of the brethren are opposed to the measure. They so much fear that we will fall into some of the old sectarian

tracks that they would prefer idleness to the doing of anything." The *Millennial Harbinger* of 1836 contains a letter by T. M. Henley which points out the dangers of these meetings. He says, "It seems to me like a departure from the simplicity of the Christian institution to have co-operation meetings with presidents and secretaries, calling for the messengers of churches, and laying off districts." He thought there was danger of this running into the "popish principles and practices of the sects."

Alexander Campbell was in favor of co-operation. His protest in the *Christian Baptist* was against ecclesiastical bodies presuming to legislate for the local church. Some of his strongest articles in the *Millennial Harbinger* during the '30's and '40's were in defense of co-operation by the churches for evangelistic and missionary work. In these articles he argued that co-operation is both reasonable and Biblical.

3. State-wide co-operation—

The conviction soon developed that the work of evangelization could not be successfully done without some definite organization which would unify their efforts. It was natural that this should develop along the lines of political divisions, hence the first general co-operation was by states. One of the first attempts at state-wide co-operation was in Illinois. A meeting of "bishops, deacons, and brethren" of the State was held at Springfield, Oc-

tober 17 to 20, 1834, to "consider the best means of spreading and promoting the cause of Christianity." An evangelist was selected, a corresponding secretary and a treasurer were appointed and an attempt was made to secure the co-operation of every congregation in Illinois. A committee was appointed "to draft an address to the congregations of Christ in the state."

Alexander Campbell in reporting the yearly meeting in Trumbull County, Ohio, in the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1839 says, "Another important resolution was unanimously adopted with a reference to strengthening one another and forming a more effectual co-operation, that it be suggested to the churches to take into consideration the propriety of having one annual general co-operation meeting of all the churches in the state." He indicated that this general meeting was intended to be in addition to the county meetings.

Those who represented the local churches in these state meetings were called messengers. That they brought credentials and were officially seated is evident from the reports made in the *Millennial Harbinger*. There were many obstacles to overcome in making these state meetings effective. Some churches were indifferent. Some refused to co-operate on the ground that the meetings were without scriptural warrant. Others refused to have fellowship because they did not believe the preachers of

some of the churches were sound in the faith. The *Millennial Harbinger* of 1835 contains an interesting letter from J. L. Rhees concerning an attempt at co-operation by the churches in the vicinity of New York. He said, "The brethren Farquharson and Sweeny came from the church in Baltimore, but not clothed with any power to act. The church in New York sent a letter declining to act in concert with us, on the ground of opinions entertained by Brother Grew, until we should inform them whether we held the same opinions or not. Of course we would not comply with the demand for a 'confession' of our views or sentiments." The Disciples wanted co-operation, but they would not permit doctrinal statements of faith to constitute the basis for this.

The first attempt to organize the forces within a state was in Indiana in 1842. This action which was taken at the "Fourth General Annual meeting of the Elders and Brethren of the Church of Christ in Indiana" was reported in the *Millennial Harbinger* of that year. The state was divided into four districts, the boundaries being definitely outlined. Those at the meeting voted to select and send out four evangelists who were to be supported by the "contributions of the disciples throughout the state." The work was to be turned over to the districts as soon as they could be properly organized.

The first state to organize definitely by adopting a constitution was Kentucky. This was at a meeting

at Lexington, May 9, 1850. This constitution declared that "all questions appertaining to the general welfare of the kingdom of Christ, not infringing upon the action or discipline of individual churches, shall be considered as proper subjects of investigation and action at the annual meeting." It was provided that "the churches be requested to district themselves according to the plan of senatorial districts; to hold annual meetings, which were to be attended by their messengers."

4. General co-operative organizations—

Co-operation which was in response to a need developed very rapidly among the Disciples. Within fifteen years from the time the Mahoning Association was dissolved, leaders from various parts of the country organized a society which was supposed to represent the whole church.

The first attempt at general co-operation was the American Christian Bible Society which was organized at Cincinnati, Ohio, January 27, 1845. The object of this society was "to aid in the distribution of the Sacred Scriptures, without note or comment, among all nations." D. S. Burnett was the first president of the society and Cincinnati was made the headquarters.

Many opposed the organization on the ground that it was not scriptural. Alexander Campbell criticized the society because he believed the work

which it proposed was being done by the American and Foreign Bible Society more successfully than this new organization could hope to do it. There was sharp controversy between him and Mr. Burnett in the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1845. Mr. Campbell's eagerness to encourage co-operation among the Disciples is indicated in his closing statement in the last article in reply to Mr. Burnett, "I will become a member of it, and do all in my power to further the benevolent objects of the institution."

The Bible Society was a step towards a general organization for evangelistic and missionary work. In response to a call made through the various publications a convention met in Cincinnati, Ohio, October 24, 1849. There were present one hundred and fifty-six delegates from eleven different states. John T. Johnson of Kentucky introduced the following resolution: "Resolved, That the 'Missionary Society,' as a means to concentrate and dispense the wealth and benevolence of the brethren of this Reformation in an effort to convert the world, is both scriptural and expedient." Under the protection of that resolution the American Christian Missionary Society was organized. The object of the society, as stated in Article 2, was "to promote the spread of the gospel in destitute places of our own and foreign lands." Cincinnati was made the headquarters and Alexander Campbell was elected the first president. The first foreign missionary to be

sent out was Dr. James Barclay. He sailed from New York, September 11, 1850, "to engage in teaching, preaching, and the practice of medicine among the Jews at Jerusalem."

5. Organizations for special tasks—

While it was intended that all the missionary work of the church should be conducted by the American Christian Missionary Society, it was soon found that most of its energies were devoted to the work of evangelization in America. This inevitably led to the forming of other societies for special tasks.

During the convention in Cincinnati in 1874 the women met in the basement of the Richmond Street Church and organized the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. Its purpose was to create interest in missions on the part of the women. As stated in Article II of the constitution, "The objects of this Association shall be to maintain preachers and teachers for religious instruction, to encourage and cultivate a missionary spirit and missionary effort in the churches, to disseminate missionary intelligence and to secure systematic contributions for such purposes; also, to establish and maintain schools and institutions for the education of both males and females." Indianapolis, Indiana, became the headquarters of this society. Mrs. Maria Jameson was the first president, and Mrs. C. N. Pearre was the first corresponding secretary.

During the convention in Louisville in 1875, at a meeting held in the basement of the First Christian Church, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society was organized. The object of this society, as stated in Article II of the constitution, was "to make disciples of all nations, and teach them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded." Cincinnati became the headquarters of this society. Isaac Errett was the first president and Robert Moffett was the first corresponding secretary. This society at first tried to start missions in Europe, but it soon pushed out into the pagan world where it was to do its great work.

To care for the orphans and the aged of the church the National Benevolent Association was organized in 1886, St. Louis, Missouri, being selected as the headquarters. The Christian Orphans' Home, which was the first institution of this Society, was opened in 1889.

To meet the demands for help in the erection of new buildings, the Church Extension Board, which was to be under the supervision of the American Christian Missionary Society, was formed in 1888. Headquarters were established in Kansas City, Missouri, because it was evident that most of these loans would be made to the western part of the country.

The Board of Ministerial Relief was organized in 1895 to minister to those who had grown old in the

service of the church. A Board of Education was organized in 1894. The Board of Temperance and Social Welfare and the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity were created to advance neglected interests.

These separate boards promoted different phases of the activities of the church. Inasmuch as each board had its day in the church calendar a campaign of education which extended through the year was conducted by the church. But as time passed it was found that there was much overlapping and wasting of energy, and there was a growing feeling that the work of the church should be unified.

6. Movement toward unification—

At the centennial convention in Pittsburg in 1909 a committee was appointed to promote the union of all the missionary and philanthropic agencies of the church. The task of this committee was difficult. Many were opposed to the union because such a movement seemed to be in the direction of the ecclesiasticism which the Disciples had always opposed. Others were not in favor of it because they thought the work could be done better by the separate boards. Ten years of education were necessary before the church was ready to take this important step.

In 1919, at the convention in Cincinnati, Ohio, the

United Christian Missionary Society came into being. In the Articles of Agreement which were adopted the American Christian Missionary Society and the Board of Church Extension, the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church, and the Board of Ministerial Relief of the Churches of Christ, consented to the forming of a new organization which should perform the duties and functions of these various societies. The constitution states that the object of the United Christian Missionary Society "shall be to preach the gospel at home and abroad; to maintain missionaries, preachers and teachers in America and other lands; to promote religious education in the churches; to establish and conduct schools, orphanages, hospitals and homes; to pension and support disabled ministers and missionaries and their dependent families; to assist in the erection of churches and other buildings for religious purposes; to disseminate religious information and encourage missionary and benevolent spirit in the churches; to solicit, receive, hold in trust and administer funds for these objects; and to engage in any other form of Christian service that will help to bring in the Kingdom of God, in which his will shall be done as in heaven, so on earth." St. Louis, Missouri, was selected as the headquarters for the new Society.

For various reasons the Board of Education of the Disciples of Christ, the Board of Temperance and Social Welfare, and the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity were not included in the United Christian Missionary Society. These boards conduct their own educational and financial campaigns, hence there is still some competition and overlapping of effort. There has been much opposition to the United Christian Missionary Society and various pretexts have been found for withholding support, but it is gaining in favor and in the not-distant future the Disciples will quite likely unify all their church activities.

Questions on the Chapter

1. What was Alexander Campbell's attitude toward the ecclesiastical authority of the Baptist Association?
2. Discuss the development of organization prior to 1845.
3. Give an account of the beginning of the American Christian Bible Society and the American Christian Missionary Society.
4. Give an account of the organization of the general boards for special tasks.
5. Give an account of the formation of the United Christian Missionary Society.

Questions for Discussion

1. Should the church modify its organization to meet changing conditions?
2. Are general organizations in the church for missionary tasks advisable?
3. Was the formation of the United Christian Missionary Society a wise move?
4. Do general organizations have ecclesiastical power over churches?
5. What modification in general organization would be advisable?

Chapter XI

An Enlarging Interpretation of Religion

The pioneer leaders of the Disciple movement could not see the outcome, but they went forth directed by faith. The members of the Christian Association of Washington did not imagine whither they would be led when they published the *Declaration and Address*. If they had realized that they would be led to abandon infant baptism and demand immersion for themselves it is doubtful whether they would have had the courage to go forward. When the members of the little Brush Run Church accepted immersion as baptism they had no thought of the course which that would lead them to take. These people who had been Presbyterians but little imagined that they would soon be fellowshipping the Baptists, a people for whom they had hitherto had but little regard. When the leaders of the movement for reform in the Baptist church began to protest against practices which they thought were not in keeping with the New Testament, they did not suppose that this protest would ultimately lead to a break which would mean another communion in Christendom. When this division became evident,

they protested vigorously against it. When the first steps were taken in the direction of co-operation, the leaders could not see the great organization into which it would ultimately develop. If they had had a glimpse of what the outcome would be they would have refused to go forward.

It is fortunate that leaders are not able to see far enough to be frightened by the changes, else they would become reactionary. Progress is made by advancing a step at a time. The church has gone forward in response to a need. Each generation has held the ground already gained and has advanced to meet new situations. Many times the outcome has been very different from what the leaders had planned, but they did the thing which seemed to be right and trusted the future to the direction of those who should come after them.

1. In their program for union—

The one distinctive plea of the Disciples during their whole history has been union, but their interpretation of the plea has not been fixed. Union was the one thing sought by the Christian Association of Washington. The members of this Association insisted that all Christians are parts of the church and that they should treat each other as though they belonged to the same family. According to the *Declaration and Address* the church has been divided by human traditions, and when these are eliminated

and the divine standard is accepted the church will be united, for all will then be standing on common ground.

The Campbells and their followers continued their plea for union after they had affiliated with the Baptists, but it had to be worked out through the church of which they were now a part. Their slogan—"Where the Scriptures speak, we speak"—led them to criticize those practices which seemed to them unscriptural. Those who wanted to reform the Baptist Church in the interest of union were called "Reformers" to distinguish them from the regular Baptists.

These Reformers insisted on the restoration of the ancient order of things as the basis of union. They sought to make their churches conform to the New Testament pattern and called upon others to do the same. When they were excluded by the Baptists, they continued as they were before. They did not regard themselves as a new denomination; they considered themselves a movement for the restoration of the New Testament church in the interest of union.

The Disciples occupied a very peculiar position for many years after their separation from the Baptists. Although union was their plea, they were very intolerant of other communions. They were convinced that union could only come by the restoration of the New Testament church, hence they were

bitterly opposed to sectarianism. They felt that they had in a measure restored the apostolic church and they regarded themselves as a peculiar people. They refused to co-operate with the denominations, and their call to the individual was to come out from among them.

During the last fifty years the spirit of co-operation with other communions has been growing among the Disciples. Union has been their aim, and they have hated the sectarian spirit as much as did their fathers, but they have felt that love and fraternity rather than opposition and controversy will further the union cause. The growing spirit of toleration has been very pronounced among the Disciples during the last fifty years. The Disciples have had a prominent part in the work of the Christian Endeavor Society from the early days of that movement to the present time. They have co-operated with the other communions in religious gatherings and evangelistic campaigns. During recent years Disciples have conducted union evangelistic meetings. The Disciples have co-operated with other communions in Sunday school work and various kinds of missionary activity.

The Disciples, in their convention at Omaha in 1902, expressed their approval of the Federation of Churches. They adopted a resolution in which the following statement is made, "We do hereby express our cordial approval of the effort to bring

the churches of this country into closer co-operation and to give truer expression to the degree of unity which already exists, as the best means of promoting that complete unity for which our Lord prayed, and we pledge our hearty co-operation with this and every other movement that has for its object the unification of believers, to the end that the world may be converted and the kingdom of righteousness established in the earth." In keeping with the spirit of that resolution the Disciples have co-operated with others in city federations, and many of their ministers have served as secretaries. They have co-operated in mission work both in the homeland and in foreign fields. The Cincinnati convention, in 1919, voted to co-operate with the other communions in the Inter-church World Movement.

The Disciples have participated in the recent interdenominational meetings in the interest of union. These meetings have been for the purpose of promoting a better understanding among the churches. The Disciples have their own Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity which publishes a magazine which circulates among all communions. There have been those who opposed all these forward steps, but in spite of the opposition the church has moved on.

The fundamental plea of the Disciples is just as essential today as it ever was. Union cannot come until the churches abandon the traditional elements

that divide. It cannot come until the sectarian spirit is abandoned and all go back to the simplicity of the apostolic days. The Disciples in their effort to help solve the union problem must conserve all the achievements of the past. They have made a great contribution which must not be sacrificed, but they must go forward following the leading of God's spirit.

2. In their doctrinal statement—

There has been a wonderful development in the doctrinal position of the Disciples. The doctrinal statements of all communions have changed very much during the last fifty years, but the fact that the Disciples have had no creed which fixed their doctrine has made it comparatively easy for them to change.

At first there was a period of comparative uniformity in doctrine. Prior to 1850 the leaders were dominated by the thinking of Alexander Campbell. During this period there were few men of broad training except the original leaders. Alexander Campbell was the thinker of the group and the rest naturally followed his leading. The man who edits a paper that has a large circulation has an exceptional opportunity to be a leader. Alexander Campbell, through his editorial policy in the *Christian Baptist* and the *Millennial Harbinger*, not only led the thinking of the Disciples, but to a large

extent unified their thought. Those who did not agree with him had the privilege of expressing themselves in the columns of the paper, but he had the last word, and his word was the one that was generally accepted by the readers. In addition to these magazines, Alexander Campbell's published debates and other works were read and followed by the masses.

After about 1850 there was a diversity of leadership. There was general agreement during the next half-century on most of the main points of doctrine, but there was wide divergence of opinion on some. Some of these differences developed into parties which finally led to a permanent division in the church. Differences increased as new periodicals were started. The Disciples have suffered much from newspaper controversy which began almost as soon as there were competitive papers.

As already noted, there were differences of opinion concerning the organization of missionary societies. Some of the publications were in favor of them, while others were opposed on the ground that they were without Scriptural warrant. A long, bitter controversy was waged over the introduction of instrumental music in the worship of the church. Some maintained that the organ is a human expedient which we are permitted to introduce without New Testament sanction, inasmuch as it does not violate the spirit of the New Testament. Others denounced

the organ as an instrument of Satan. Congregations were divided over this question, and it was an important contributing factor to the final division in the church.

The controversies over missionary societies and the use of the organ in worship were manifestations of a general difference of attitude of mind. Those who insisted on a "thus saith the Lord" for the missionary society and the organ were literalists in all their doctrinal interpretations. Those who favored these expedients in worship and in the management of the affairs of the church had a more liberal attitude in their interpretation of doctrine generally.

Notwithstanding their insistence on what they believed were the evident teachings of the Scriptures, the Disciple leaders have always been characterized by a spirit of liberality. This liberal spirit was beautifully expressed by Isaac Errett in the discussion of the subject of open communion. He closed one of his letters with this statement, "For myself, while fully devoted to our plea, I have no wish to limit and fetter my sympathies and affections to our own people." The tendency of the Disciples at the present time is towards a greater liberality in the interpretation of religion. While they are true to the ideals of the past they are trying to solve the problems of the present. They preach the gospel of Christ, but they do not place so much

stress on the peculiarities of the Disciples. They place more emphasis on the things that unite than upon the things that divide. The Bible is emphasized as the spiritual guide of the race rather than as a code of laws. The kingdom is given the spiritual and social interpretation of the Master. The Disciples of our day are more cordial in their relation to the members of other communions than they were formerly.

3. In the worship of the church—

The worship of the church is an important part of its life and program. It is in the worship of the church that individuals receive inspiration for their tasks. When one compares the worship of an average city church of the Disciples at the present time with what it was in 1830, he must be impressed with the wonderful changes that have taken place. The development in worship has kept pace with the development along other lines.

At first the houses of worship were very plain, and simplicity was made a matter of religious conviction. In the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1832, Alexander Campbell calls attention to some new meeting houses that are being erected and urges simplicity. He says, "It is most devoutly to be wished that all those who plead for reformation would carry out their principles in the plainness, convenience, and cheapness of the buildings which they erect for the

assemblies of Christians. No greater satire could be inscribed on marble against the religion of Jesus Christ, than are many of the houses called churches, whenever the people have the means of gratifying the spirit which is in them. * * * Let there be only a regard to convenience and durability; let all that is merely to gratify the lusts of the eye and the pride of life be left to them who seek to gain influence on the children of the flesh by reducing Christianity to the taste and fashion of this world."

In the *Millennial Harbinger* of 1834, Alexander Campbell has an article on "Meeting Houses." After urging contributions for the erection of houses for worship he describes the kind of building he would like to see erected. He said, "Stately synagogues, with tall steeples, lofty pulpits, and magnificent galleries, are a satire upon the Christian profession. A Christian meeting house ought to be humble, commodious, and free from the splendor of this vain and sinful world. Were we called upon to project a meeting house consonant to reason and religion, we should have to describe one which we have never seen. It should be a one-story house, without steeple, galleries, or pulpit. The floor should be an inclined plane, descending from the entrance one foot in every eight or ten. The Lord's Table and the seats for the elders of the congregation should be at the remote end, opposite to the en-

trance, and consequently on the lowest part of the floor, visible to every eye in the house.”

These ideas of simplicity and plainness controlled the architecture of the Disciples for a long time. They put up one-story, rectangular buildings, without steeple or gallery. The houses were built for preaching, hence there was only one room. Gradually they began to adopt more elaborate plans, and during the past generation many fine buildings have been erected in various parts of the United States. Many of them are two stories high, many of them have galleries, many of them have steeples, and some of them even have chimes in the steeples.

Not only are the Disciples at the present time erecting church buildings out of costly material, with many rooms to meet the growing needs of a modern church, but the floors are covered with expensive carpet and the auditorium is adorned with beautiful stained-glass windows. It is a long step from the building described by Alexander Campbell to some of those that have recently been erected by the Disciples.

For a long time the music of the churches consisted entirely of congregational singing. Instrumental music was not thought of in connection with the worship of the church. Some of the churches began to introduce the organ during the early '60's, and a controversy began which caused trouble in churches and finally led to a definite division. The

controversy was really begun by the introduction of a melodeon into the services of the church at Midway, Kentucky, in 1860. The question was discussed in the *Millennial Harbinger*, the *American Christian Review*, *Lard's Quarterly*, and other periodicals. A brief remark of W. K. Pendleton, following an article by A. S. Hayden on "Instrumental Music in Churches," indicates that there was not much thought that the organ would gain a place for itself in the worship of the Christian Church. He said, "I do not think that the organ is likely to be a siren of much mischief among us at present. I hope that our churches have a better present use for their surplus cash than to spend it upon such 'wind of doctrine,' as an organ. Let us spend more time in training our own throats and in cultivating the musical powers which God has given us in the voices of our children, and we will have less need for the mechanical aids of organ pipes."

Gradually the churches adopted instrumental music, first the melodeon, then the reed organ, and finally the pipe organ. When the organ was introduced, the best singers naturally sat near it. After a time they were separated from the rest of the congregation by sitting back of the organ in the corner. Finally a special choir loft was arranged for them. At first the choir was merely to lead the congregation, but in the course of time it rendered special music which became a prominent feature of

the worship. With the introduction of special music, trained singers were sought for the choir. Inasmuch as music was their profession they were paid for their services, and members of other communions or even non-Christians were sometimes secured.

A characteristic feature of the worship of the Disciples for many years was simplicity and lack of formality. The service was spontaneous and free from all ritualistic elements. As time passed the worship became more dignified and formal. The congregation joined in the Lord's Prayer and in responsive reading. Responses were sung by the choir, and other ritualistic elements were introduced. Many congregations have a printed order of service which is carried out without modification.

There is a marked difference between the way the ordinances are administered in many of the city churches of today and the way they were administered in the best churches of fifty years ago. Baptism was formerly administered in the streams, and it was usually "the same hour of the night," regardless of whether it was summer or winter. It was no unusual thing for a hole to be cut in the ice large enough for the administration of the ordinance. Old clothes were many times worn both by the candidate and the minister. There was no attempt to make the service beautiful and impressive. Inasmuch as baptism was a commandment to be obeyed,

the beauty of the service was a matter of secondary concern.

The aim today in the best churches is to make the service spiritually impressive. The rite is performed in a baptistry, and, in the modern church, convenience and impressiveness determine the arrangement of the baptismal pool. The water is warm so that the health of the candidate will not in any way be endangered, and the mind can be more definitely fixed on the purpose of the ordinance. In the best churches appropriate robes are worn both by the candidate and the administrator. Inasmuch as emphasis is placed on the symbolism, the desire is to make the service as impressive as possible.

A great change has also come in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It was formerly believed that the emblems must consist of unleavened bread and fermented wine, and that the wine must be passed in the common cup. In the best churches of the Disciples at the present time unfermented grape juice is used and it is passed in individual cups. For many years after the Disciples became a distinct body they practiced close communion, but they have broadened their interpretation and now members of other bodies are welcome at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The fact that the Disciples have not permitted their faith to become stereotyped in a written creed has enabled them to move on with the world.

Questions on the Chapter

1. How did the early Disciple leaders modify their program for union?
2. How have the Disciples in recent years modified their attitude towards other communions?
3. Show how there has been a development in the doctrinal position of the Disciples.
4. Discuss the development in the erection of houses of worship.
5. Discuss the development in the worship of the Disciples.

Questions for Discussion

1. Should there be development in the interpretation of religion to meet changing conditions?
2. In the interest of union what should be the attitude of the Disciples towards other communions?
3. What should be the attitude of the liberals and conservatives among the Disciples towards each other?
4. Should we erect expensive church buildings?
5. How might the worship of the Disciples be enriched?

Chapter XII

The Expanding Program of the Disciples

When one studies the brief history of the Disciples he must be impressed with the wonderful development which they have made. Within less than a century of separate existence they have expanded from a few scattered congregations to a great organized communion which has a program that comprehends the world.

1. Numerical strength—

It is impossible to make a correct statement concerning the numerical strength of the Disciples. Their congregational form of government makes it difficult to get correct reports from the churches. Many of the smaller churches will not report to the secretaries and their membership, as published, is only an estimate. Because of the difficulty of getting reports, churches that have ceased to exist are listed in the *Year Book*. The Disciples are rather lax in keeping their church rolls. In most churches there are many names on the registers that should not be counted as members. Many of these do not consider themselves as members. Inasmuch as most Disciple ministers receive members from other

churches without letters of dismissal, many names are carried on the rolls of two or more churches. This will inevitably happen unless the churches from which the members come are notified of their reception into other churches, and that is not generally done by the Disciples. Many ministers, anxious to make a good showing, do not report the members that can actually be counted. They keep adding to the previous report the new additions without making proper reduction on account of those that should not be regarded as members. This results in a reported membership that is in excess of what it actually is.

Those who compile the *Year Book* recognize the impossibility of getting accurate statistics. The limitation of their task is due to the independence of the local church. Each minister has his own method of reporting, and many churches have no interest in making reports. The membership, or even existence, of some churches is only a guess. According to the *1923 Year Book*, which is our most reliable source of information, the Disciples have 8,792 churches in the United States, 114 in Canada, 201 in Great Britain, and 540 in other parts of the world. They have 1,303,252 members in the United States, 8,678 in Canada, 16,306 in Great Britain, and 50,732 in the rest of the world. The Disciples report 9,533 churches with a total membership of 1,383,247. According to the *Year Book* there are six churches

that have a membership of over 2,500 each, and one of these claims a membership of 4,000. According to the *Year Book* there are in the United States and Canada 5,866 white preachers and 284 colored. It should be stated, however, that 1,121 of these are also engaged in some form of business. After making the necessary allowances for inaccuracies in the report, it must be conceded that the Disciples have had a wonderful growth in their short history.

A study of the distribution of the Disciples discloses some interesting facts. Half of their numerical strength is in five states of the Middle West. Indiana is in the lead with 146,434 members. Missouri, Kentucky and Illinois are not far behind Indiana, while Ohio has 113,974 Disciples. The Disciple movement began in Western Pennsylvania and soon had strong centers in Central Kentucky and in the Western Reserve in the northeastern part of Ohio. Migration waves swept through these sections into Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and other sections, and the Reformation preachers went with them and laid the foundation for future churches. Kansas reports 73,406 Disciples, while Iowa claims 67,547.

The Disciples have very few churches east of where the movement started. There are 24,549 Disciples in the western half of Pennsylvania, but there are only 9,431 in the eastern half. There are less than 25,000 Disciples in the whole section of the

United States east of where the movement began. As a rule the Disciples did not waste their energies trying to build on foundations already laid; they pushed on into a new territory and planted churches that have grown up with the communities. Texas has about 65,000 Disciples, and there are over 50,000 in Oklahoma.

2. Educational institutions—

At first there was a general indifference among the Disciples on the subject of education. Unkind remarks were made in the early days about special training for ministers. Preachers boasted of the fact that they had never been to college.

From about 1840 the leaders began to urge the necessity of education. There had been some academies conducted by the Disciples before this, and Bacon College at Georgetown, Kentucky, was founded in 1836, but a new impetus was given to education in 1840. In that year Bacon College was moved to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and a charter was obtained for Bethany College. Alexander Campbell was president of Bethany, and because of his leadership interest in education became general.

The Disciples in the different sections of the country began to realize the importance of colleges for building up the cause in which they were so much interested, hence several were started within a very short period. The Disciples of the Western Reserve established the Western Eclectic Institute at Hiram,

Ohio, in 1850. The name of this institution was later changed to Hiram College. The same year the Disciples of Indiana founded Northwestern Christian University at Indianapolis, the name being later changed to Butler College. Walnut Grove Academy had been started under Disciple patronage in 1848. The state meeting of Illinois in 1852 recommended it as the school for the Disciples of the state. It was chartered as Eureka College in 1855. A college was established by the Disciples of Iowa at Oskaloosa in 1856. This college was later forced to abandon its work because it was overshadowed by Drake University, which was founded under the patronage of General F. M. Drake at Des Moines, in 1881. The added impetus in the work of the Disciples which followed the planting of these schools led to the establishment of others, so that at the present time there are colleges in every section of the country where the Disciples have any strength.

When Bethany College was started, Alexander Campbell made the Bible a textbook in the college course. This was regarded as adequate training for the ministry. The other colleges followed the example of Bethany in the provision for ministerial training. This vitally influenced the character of the education of the Disciple ministry. The training of the majority of the ministers at the present time is limited to a regular college course which includes some Biblical studies.

Kentucky University, now Transylvania College, was moved from Harrodsburg to Lexington. The College of the Bible was organized as a part of Kentucky University in 1865. It received its charter as an independent institution in 1878. Its distinctive mission from the start was to train young ministers in the Bible and kindred subjects. It offered a three-years' course of special training, and has rendered an invaluable service to the Disciples. Because of the criticism of theological seminaries which had frequently been made by Disciples, this new institution was designated as the College of the Bible.

The Lexington institution became the model according to which others were patterned. When Drake University was begun in 1881, the College of the Bible was established for the special training of ministers and was made a distinctive part of the institution. Some of the other colleges have also followed this plan and have established separate departments for the training of ministers and missionaries.

The youngest of these institutions for special religious training is the College of Missions at Indianapolis, Indiana. It was begun by the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, and it is at present under the direction of the United Christian Missionary Society. Its purpose is to give special missionary training to those who have graduated from other colleges.

Until about a generation ago the Disciples held aloof from the large universities as training schools for ministers, and many still look upon them with suspicion. They have, however, been regarding them with increasing favor, and a considerable group of Disciples preparing for the ministry is to be found each year in several of these large universities. The Disciples have even established schools for theological training in connection with some of these.

Although much remains to be done by the Disciples in developing their educational program, they have made considerable progress. They have colleges in various sections of the country, and some of these are becoming fairly well equipped. They have many schools for ministerial training which offer short courses to those who have inadequate collegiate training, but they have a few institutions with courses of study which meet the needs of our day. The Disciples are beginning to develop an educational conscience.

The twenty-five colleges co-operating under the Board of Education have a teaching force of 487 men and women. These colleges, according to the *1923 Year Book*, have a productive endowment of \$6,371,704.06 with total assets of \$16,237,870.64. The most encouraging feature of the educational program of the Disciples is that the assets of these twenty-five colleges have doubled in the last nine years.

The educational program of the Disciples has been worked out by the sacrifices of many loyal souls. Walter Scott, the first president of Bacon College, and Alexander Campbell, the first president of Bethany, were pioneers, but they were followed by many who were not inferior either in ability or in sacrifices that were made. The future of the Disciples will depend in no small degree on the character of their educational institutions.

3. Missionary achievements—

Considering the length of time they have been working at it, the Disciples have made marked progress in the development of their missionary program. From a people who had practically no interest in missions they have developed in a half-century a splendid program with sufficient organization to make it effective.

Before the Disciples could have any missionary program there had to be some general organization of their forces. The man who did most to make general organization possible was David S. Burnett. He believed the future of the Disciples would be determined by the way they responded to the need of organization. In looking back over his life, he said, "I consider the inauguration of the society system, which I vowed to urge upon the brethren if God raised me from my protracted illness of 1845 was one of the most important acts of my career." Mr. Burnett was the moving spirit in the organization

of the American Christian Bible Society. He was the first president and he was enthusiastic in the defense of the organization. Mr. Burnett was chairman of the meeting which organized the American Christian Missionary Society, and he did much to make that organization possible. He served as corresponding secretary during two different periods. These organizations led the Disciples to think in terms of co-operation for missionary enterprises.

It was A. McLean who did most to place missions on the heart of the Disciples. When he became secretary of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society in 1882 only a few thousand dollars were given for all missionary purposes; when he died in 1920 the receipts were two million dollars. By visiting churches, colleges and conventions he helped to train a generation of men and women who believe in missions. Through his writings he has been speaking to the whole brotherhood. By his own self-sacrificing spirit he influenced the Disciples in giving. His interest in young people and his absolute sincerity made him very effective in enlisting volunteers for the foreign field.

Many other men and women consecrated their lives to the task of making the Disciples a missionary people. After an interest had been developed along the various lines of missionary and philanthropic activity these agencies were brought together in the United Christian Missionary Society.

There are some independent missionary enterprises that are being conducted by churches and individuals who do not approve of the United Christian Missionary Society, but most of the missionary and benevolent activities of the church are being carried forward under the direction of this great organization. The total receipts of the United Christian Missionary Society, as reported in the *1923 Year Book*, were \$2,912,157.18.

Under the direction of this Society work is being done in Africa (Belgian Congo), China, India, Japan, Tibet, Mexico, Philippines, Porto Rico, and South America (Argentine and Paraguay). In these lands there are 45 stations with 520 out-stations. There are 325 foreign missionaries with 1,838 native workers. There are 229 organized churches, and 826 regular places of meeting. These churches have a membership of 26,327, and three of these churches are self-supporting. 3,331 members were added in 1922. There are 655 Sunday schools with 26,960 pupils enrolled. Forty-five hospitals and dispensaries are being maintained, and in these there are 306,000 annual treatments. There are 347 schools of lower grade and eight colleges. A number of orphanages are being maintained, and the Disciples are co-operating with other communions in union colleges and hospitals. According to the *1923 Year Book*, \$269,530.29 was raised the preceding year in these foreign lands for the maintenance of the work. The

value of the property in these lands is given as \$1,822,081.80.

The United Christian Missionary Society, either through state organizations or independently, carries on missionary work in needy parts of America. Evangelists are sent into new fields and pastors are kept in promising churches until they are self-supporting. Through the extension fund churches are assisted in the erection of houses of worship. There is in this fund at the present time \$1,926,963.21. Since the fund was started \$2,988,680.25 has been returned on the loans that were made, and \$986,554.10 has been received as interest. Through this fund 2,240 churches have been aided in the erection of their buildings, and 1,809 churches have paid back their loans in full.

The Disciples through the United Christian Missionary Society are doing an important work in the mountains of Kentucky and Tennessee. Schools are maintained at Hazel Green and Livingstone from which Christian leaders are sent out into all parts of the mountains.

Work is being done among the immigrants in four important centers. Through the Brotherhood House work is being done among the foreign population of Chicago. Through the Broadway Church an important work is being done among the foreigners of Cleveland. The Disciples' Community House of New York City is helping to Americanize and Christianize

the immigrants who pour in through that gateway. Missionary work is also being done among the foreigners in the coke region of the western part of Pennsylvania.

The progress of the Disciples includes work among the colored people of the South. The Disciples do not have many colored churches, as there are only 284 colored preachers listed in the *1923 Year Book*, but through their educational program they are helping to train Christian leaders for the colored race. The following institutions are being conducted under the direction of the United Christian Missionary Society: Southern Christian Institute at Edwards, Mississippi; Jarvis Christian Institute at Hawkins, Texas; Piedmont Christian Institute at Martinsville, Virginia; Alabama Christian Institute at Lum, Alabama; and Central Christian Institute at Shepardsville, Kentucky. Flanner Hall in Indianapolis, which is doing a splendid work among the colored people of that city, is under the direction of the United Christian Missionary Society.

The Disciples are working among the orientals on the western coast. They maintain the Japanese Christian Institute in Los Angeles, and the Japanese Church at Berkeley. The Disciples are doing some work among the Spanish and the Mexicans in the Southwest, and they have begun a work among the Indians of Washington.

Under the direction of the United Christian Mis-

sionary Society the Disciples are working among the students in some of the state universities. They have established Bible Chairs in the University of Michigan, the University of Virginia, Kansas University, and the University of Texas. In the University of Missouri the Disciples have a School of Religion which not only seeks to minister to the spiritual life of the students but which also trains for special religious service. This, as well as the School of Religion at the University of Indiana, is affiliated with the Board of Education.

The Disciples maintain a number of homes for orphan children. There are six under the direction of the United Christian Missionary Society: the Christian Orphans' Home in St. Louis, the Cleveland Christian Home in Cleveland, the Juliette Fowler Home in Dallas, the Colorado Christian Home in Denver, the Southern Christian Home in Atlanta, and the Child Saving Institute in Omaha. In addition to these there are others that are maintained by the Disciples in particular sections. The Disciples of Kentucky have a splendid Children's Home in Louisville. The Disciples also maintain homes for the aged. There are six under the direction of the United Christian Missionary Society: the Christian Old People's Home in Jacksonville, Illinois; the Sarah Harwood Hall in Dallas, Texas; the Northwestern Christian Home in Walla Walla, Washington; the California Christian Home

in Long Beach; the Emily Flinn Home in Marion, Indiana; and the Florida Christian Home in Jacksonville, Florida. There are other homes maintained by the Disciples of smaller sections. The Disciples have barely made a beginning in establishing hospitals. There is only one hospital under the management of the church, and that is Valparaiso Christian Hospital at Valparaiso, Indiana.

The Disciples have sought to care for the aged ministers, but much remains to be done along this line. According to the *1923 Year Book* 249 were receiving assistance, and these received an average of only \$22.50 per month. In 1919 a pension system was established. Ministers have been slow in co-operating, but 712 have already enrolled as pensioners and there is now in this fund \$278,012.56.

The *World Call* is the missionary magazine of the Disciples. The various boards formerly had their own magazines for the promotion of their work, but when these boards were affiliated in the United Society these publications were merged in the *World Call*. This magazine, which is published monthly, has a large circulation and is doing much to enlarge the vision of the Disciples.

4. Future outlook—

The Disciples have not moved forward as a united body. Every forward movement has been in the face of opposition. Because of opposition to the

enlarging program a large number of churches refused to be counted among those whom they charged with having departed from the New Testament standard. They called themselves the Church of Christ and denounced the main body as digressors. According to the government census of 1916 this branch which has seceded from the main body claimed 5,570 churches with a membership of 317,937. Most of their strength is in the South. Texas reports 1,240 churches, and Tennessee has 995. Those who belong to this group do not attend the conventions or have any fellowship with the Disciples. They publish their own Year Book, have their own schools, publish their own papers, and have their own missionary work. They have made their opposition to instrumental music in worship and to missionary societies a dogma which limits their growth and influence.

There has been much controversy in recent years in the main body of the Disciples. This controversy has centered in the United Christian Missionary Society and in certain colleges. Some would hold rigidly to the past in interpretation and in method of work, while others would modify interpretation and method to meet the changing conditions of the world. The controversy has been waged through the church papers, in congresses and in the conventions.

If the Disciples are to have any message on union

for the Christian world, they must keep the unity of the Spirit in their own ranks. What they need is a missionary and educational challenge that will compel them to forget the differences which they have been magnifying.

Questions on the Chapter

1. Why is it impossible to be exact in giving the numerical strength of the Disciples?
2. Where is the greatest strength of the Disciples?
3. Give an account of the beginning of the leading educational institutions of the Disciples.
4. Give a summary of the work that is being done under the direction of the United Christian Missionary Society.
5. What is the *World Call*?

Questions for Discussion

1. Should the Disciples enlarge their educational institutions?
2. How could the Disciples increase their missionary efficiency?
3. Were the non-progressives justified in withdrawing from the main body?
4. Would another split in the church at the present time be advisable?
5. What should be the future aim of the Disciples?

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